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STACIE E. GODDARD
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The Oxford Handbooks of INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

GENERAL EDITORS:
Christian Reus-Smit
and Duncan Snidal

The Oxford Handbook *of* INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

THE OXFORD HANDBOOKS OF **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

General Editors
Christian Reus-Smit of the University of Queensland and Duncan Snidal of the University of Oxford

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INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

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STACIE E. GODDARD,

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

STACIE E. GODDARD, GEORGE LAWSON, AND OLE JACOB SENDING

On November 19, 2023, as we were writing this introductory essay, Argentinians elected Javier Milei, a self-declared "anarcho-capitalist," as their president; three days later, Geert Wilders, a more established far-right figure, won the Dutch elections. Milei and Wilders join a number of current or former leaders—Viktor Orbán, Giorgi Miloni, Jair Bolsonaro, and Donald Trump amongst them—whose rhetoric, performances, and practices constitute a global movement of the "radical right" (see Drolet, this volume). We are also writing six weeks into a desperate conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, some 18 months into the vicious war that has followed the Russian invasion of Ukraine and several years into devastating internationalized civil wars in Yemen, Sudan, Libya, Myanmar, Syria, and elsewhere. In Latin America and the Caribbean, large numbers of migrants go through nightmarish experiences in attempting to move within and across borders. Earlier this month, the Earth's temperature briefly rose above the threshold that scientists have warned could have catastrophic, irreversible impacts on the planet. Over the past few years, we have experienced a shattering pandemic that has questioned the very basis on which people live and interact. Technologies of various kinds appear to be transforming the nature of everyday life and, in the process, helping to usher in a new form of twenty-first-century capitalism. Protest movements, many of them transnational in orientation and organization, challenge these developments, leading some to argue that we are living in a "new age of revolution" (see Selbin, this volume). No wonder this feels like a world in crisis.

An avalanche of work is concerned with analyzing the sources and consequences of this "polycrisis" (Morin and Kern 1999; Tooze 2022). For several reasons, International Political Sociology (IPS) is particularly well placed to contribute to these debates. First, IPS scholarship treats world politics as a social space of meaning-making, boundary-drawing, and contestation. Rather than assuming, for example, that actors have fixed identities and capacities, it asks questions about how these actors are constituted and change over time. A "crisis," in this view, is less the result of shifts in the "objective" character of world politics than it is the result of changing interpretations and experiences of events. Second, IPS scholarship has always been open to the idea that this is a "world on the move." Rather than treat world politics as a static arena made up of the interactions of states that possess predetermined interests,

IPS scholarship examines the flows that lie behind the dynamics of emergence, reproduction, and contestation. As such, IPS is concerned with the push-and-pull dynamics that sustain processes of ordering, struggle, and crisis. Third, if IPS is keenly interested in elite politics and performances, it is also concerned with the "everyday" ways in which people around the world make sense of, and challenge, global crises. As a result, it challenges taken-for-granted assumptions about what "matters" in world politics, asking why some aspects of crises are well documented and others more subterranean. In the process, IPS scholarship opens up distinct understandings of power, actor-hood, and agency. Finally, IPS challenges the substantive issue areas through which disciplinary International Relations (IR) is organized. Although IPS scholarship contributes extensively to debates about security, political economy, and global governance, it is also home to novel sites of enquiry, including those within which understandings of crisis are often most acutely experienced: mobilities and borders, performances and practices, logistics and surveillance. Often, IPS is concerned with the "transversal," or intersecting, dimensions of these dynamics (Basaran et al. 2016).

No wonder, then, that over the past two decades or so, IPS has become a major sub-field within IR. The IPS section of the International Studies Association (ISA), established in 2006, is one of the largest in the association. IPS is also the subject of a major journal published under the ISA umbrella, a prominent book series, and a number of research groups. By any measure, IPS is a success story. Given this, why is there a need for a handbook of IPS? At the most basic level, a stock-taking exercise of a burgeoning, but still emerging, field can make a significant contribution, providing an overview of the field and its major work and offering a first port of call for curious students and scholars. This Handbook joins efforts to explore and map the multiple contributions of IPS research (e.g. Huysmans and Nogueira 2016; Guillaume and Bilgin 2017; Lisle, Squire, and Doty 2017; Grayson and Grove 2022). However, this Handbook also seeks to present and discuss IPS with something of a twist. The space occupied by IPS is, potentially, vast—in principle at least, the domain of enquiry opened up by sociological approaches to world politics is huge. If that presents one difficulty for a handbook of this kind, a second arises from the fact that the features of IPS noted in the previous paragraph bring it into conversation with a wide range of research, from feminism to political geography. Given this open canvass, it is little surprise that, as it emerged, IPS became oriented around a "hardcore" set of assumptions (e.g. self-consciously critical work) and issue areas (e.g. borders and migration). As we outline below, this take on IPS has been institutionalized in many of its practices, including most of its collective surveys and the house journal of the sub-field: *International Political Sociology*. For us, this has produced something of a mismatch between the (somewhat narrow) institutional terrain of IPS and its (extremely wide) intellectual agenda.

In recent years, this mismatch has begun to recede. As we discuss in the following sections, IPS research is increasingly free-range in terms of the questions it asks, the

topics it engages, and the approaches it takes. There is a range of topics being published in the journal *International Political Sociology* and elsewhere that suggest an engagement with sociological theories beyond those that have historically marked the core identity of the sub-field. Examples include work drawing on Randall Collins' (2008) micro-sociological approach that engages the practice theoretical approaches that have been central to IPS scholarship over the past decade or so (Bramsen 2023, comp. Adler and Pouliot 2011; Bigo 2011; Adler-Nissen 2016). Forms of network analysis are increasingly being used to empirically investigate relational dynamics, another key feature of IPS scholarship (Ellersgard et al. 2017; Montgomery, this volume). In our own scholarship, we have found value in drawing on insights from a broad array of political sociological approaches, such as Charles Tilly's work, both single or co-authored, on contentious politics (e.g. Lawson 2019) and repertoires (e.g. Goddard, MacDonald, and Nexon 2019), and Ann Swidler's understanding of culture as a means to theorize agency and heteronomy (e.g. Sending 2016). We join this work, and other related enterprises (e.g. Guillaume and Bilgin 2017), which have sought both to underline the contribution of IPS as currently constituted *and* sought to extend its reach. Alongside this burgeoning scholarship, we see engagement with as wide as possible a range of political sociological work as central to the vitality of IPS going forwards. Our view is that there is a danger that an internally driven enterprise will lose some of its intellectual vivacity if its agenda is not sustained—and challenged—by diverse sources, participants, and approaches. This Handbook therefore includes work that is currently central to the sub-field alongside contributions that push at its boundaries.

Our aim with this Handbook, therefore, is to do more than present the state of the art within IPS. Rather, in keeping with its sociological underpinnings, we see IPS as a "relational formation," by which we mean a field of enquiry that is constituted, reproduced, and contested through a dialogue between a diverse range of approaches rooted in political sociology and applied to "the international." We do not define IPS in a "substantialist" way, designating the field with a certain disposition, set of properties, or research agenda. To the contrary, we want to challenge IPS to keep being attuned to a diverse set of sociological theories and approaches to further support its multiple agendas. In this sense, while the heart of IPS remains a highly productive, self-consciously "critical" mode of enquiry that has generated important insights into mobilities, migration, borders, and more, there are emerging signs of an auxiliary belt of approaches, themes, concepts, and research strategies that are also contributing in significant ways to the sub-discipline. Taking both together, IPS can be conceptualized as a social space where sites of enquiry—urban spaces, infrastructural hubs, social movements, empires, bordering practices, forms of international administration, and more—are produced through socio-political processes rather than received *ex ante*. This is a wide-angle lens on IPS. And it is one that we think is rich in its possibilities.

This approach to, and ambition for, IPS differentiates our volume from other surveys of the field in two main ways.

First, we expand the field of IPS to include work that is not always seen as a central part of IPS (such as Marxian-inspired historical sociology) and political sociological scholarship that seeks to contribute to mainstream debates (such as social network analysis). When the sub-field emerged, it made sense for IPS to be a self-consciously critical enterprise. A central part of the raison d'être of IPS was to provide an intellectual and institutional space through which to critique dominant orientations in IR scholarship and cultivate new research agendas. Given the success of IPS and, we would argue, the somewhat more open, global discipline that exists today, we think that treating IPS *only* as a site of critical inquiry obscures both the wider significance of political sociology to IR and the central role that IPS can play in developing this agenda. Alongside cognate approaches, from feminism to post-structural work, IPS has helped to foster a number of crucial questions: what constitutes power and how power is wielded, organized, and legitimated; what actors beyond elites "matter" in world politics, and how everyday IR is practiced; what sites of enquiry should be considered to be part of IR and what innovative procedures can be used to study them; how we can rethink major issue areas in IR—war, security, diplomacy—through IPS reasoning and procedures; how race, class, gender, and other systems of stratification influence the formation of world orders; how, where, and when bordering practices emerge, become routinized and challenged, and more. These questions inform—and are informed by—an array of political sociological approaches. At the same time, wrestling with the central questions of IPS does not, it seems to us, require a specific mode of theorizing, a particular ontology or epistemology, or a single set of procedures. As such, this Handbook includes a wider range of political sociological approaches than is commonly assumed to be part of IPS. We do not include these approaches out of any desire to uproot IPS from its origins, police the sub-field, or shift the approach in radically new directions. Rather, we do so simply to ask questions of IPS scholarship about how broad it can be and where the edges of the approach reside—after all, as a relational formation, IPS is always being produced, reproduced, and contested.

Second, we hope to demonstrate the breadth and depth of the substantive contributions IPS makes to IR. With this goal in mind, the opening chapters in each section survey the field and discuss how political sociological approaches generate specific insights and avenues for future research. The idea is that encouraging scholars well versed in IPS to explicitly engage a wide variety of viewpoints will clarify where their arguments reside, converge, and differ. To that end, these lead chapters are co-authored, often between scholars with different positionalities within and to IPS, with a view to enabling the critical conversations that we see as the lifeblood of IPS as an intellectual space. Each section includes chapters from those already committed to IPS, plus those who operate at something of a remove from it, again with the intention of teasing out the edges and boundaries of IPS as a field of enquiry. This produces an introduction to IPS that, we think, works both for those already committed to the approach and those who are not—currently—its main audience. Our aim is to push IPS

as an intellectual project, including toward approaches and issue areas that may be less familiar to its primary constituencies. We know that this approach will not be to everyone's taste. But, at the very least, we hope that it stimulates debate and, as a result, helps to energize IPS scholarship.

The following, second, section of the introduction briefly outlines the emergence of IPS as a sub-field and discusses how the international, the political, and the sociological are defined and relate to each another in IPS scholarship. The third section identifies three meta-commitments that, we think, lie at the heart of IPS scholarship: relationalism, intersubjectivity, and historicism. We discuss the logics and contours of these commitments and identify how they constitute the porous boundaries of IPS. The fourth section explores the operationalization of these meta-commitments to "social stuff": order, power, actors and agency, and resistance. A brief conclusion summarizes our arguments.

The two worlds of IPS

While IPS as a distinct field of enquiry is relatively recent, sociological insights have always been present in the study of IR (Lawson and Shilliam 2010). Indeed, it could be argued that there is relatively little IR theory that stands outside the influence of sociological approaches. The most prominent Realist of the past half century, Kenneth Waltz (1979: esp. ch. 6), borrowed extensively from Emile Durkheim (via Parsons) in generating his conception of international anarchy (Goddard and Nexon 2005). Robert Gilpin (1981), too, engaged closely with sociological approaches, in his case world-systems analysis, in his work on hegemonic stability. Both constructivism and the English School also draw heavily on sociological resources, primarily symbolic interactionism and structuration theory for the former, functionalism and Habermasian social theory for the latter. Max Weber's notion of rationalization underpins a number of IR theories in ways that go well beyond his identification as a political realist (Barkawi 1998; Jackson 2002; Williams 2004). W.E.B. Du Bois was influential in the development of early IR theory, even if this influence was later obscured (Vitalis 2016). The wide-ranging impact of Marxian-inspired approaches is well established (Teschke 2008). Further encounters between sociology and IR include the overt use of sociological classics by IR scholars, such as Erving Goffman's (1963) work on stigma, Niklas Luhmann's (1997) version of systems theory, and John Meyer et al.'s (1997) work on 'world society'; associations mediated through other approaches and disciplines, such as Michael Mann's (1986) study of the sources of social power in world history; and the use of concepts that, in their contemporary enunciations, have been previously developed by social theorists, such as "rationality," "agency," "class," "gender," and "society."

Despite this rich provenance, for a long time, sociological influences on IR were relatively neglected. And at times, the discipline moved formally away from sociology. As Stefano Guzzini (2017: 368) notes, by the 1980s the study of world politics had become narrow, engaged in a "purely systemic analysis of inter-state politics—and anchored its theoretical underpinnings in a form of utilitarianism: states as value-maximizing agents facing each other in a strategic game of cooperation or conflict under anarchy". Sociology resurfaced explicitly as a means of problematizing the core assumptions of mainstream IR theory, especially the assumptions underlying the so-called "inter-paradigm debate" (Bigo and Walker 2007). This was the context within which IPS emerged, albeit (we would argue) as a space with two main currents: first, an explicitly "critical" stream, housed mainly in Europe, which drew largely on post-structural resources (e.g. Bartelson 1995; Hansen 1997; Huysmans 1998; Neumann 1996); and second, a "constructivist" stream, based mainly in North America, which drew on symbolic interactionism and related approaches (e.g. Adler and Barnett 1998; Finnemore 1996; Katzenstein 1996). Despite the largely shared meta-theoretical commitments that lay behind both approaches (Price and Reus-Smit 1998), over time these "two worlds" of IPS diverged and hardened. As they did so, IPS became identified primarily with the critical, European stream of research.

There was nothing inevitable about this development, however. Both forms of theorizing emerged from meta-theoretical reflections about the ontic underpinnings of world politics and the epistemic conditions for understanding it. For example, in the 1980s, there was considerable affinity between the two streams in terms of their critique of rationalist approaches and the promise of understanding IR as a social space. Richard Ashley (1984) argued that conventional IR approaches reduced politics to technique; for Ashley, the state should be understood—with Foucault—as an effect of boundary-drawing and disciplining practices. James Der Derian (1987) claimed that diplomacy was a distinctly *social* practice of mediation that defined relations between sovereigns. Alexander Wendt (1987) demonstrated the importance of understanding agency and structure as socially produced rather than predetermined through material capabilities. Similarly, Fritz Kratochwil (1989) explored the ways in which legal scholarship could be used to rethink the ways in which rules and norms structured forms of reasoning. Martha Finnemore (1996) showed how insights from sociological institutionalism could be marshalled to re-conceptualize the concept of "state interest," demonstrating how interests evolved in light of changes in international norms.

The growing distinction between the "two worlds" of IPS, therefore, had more to do with institutional position than with meta-theoretical commitments. North American scholarship had a far greater proximity to rationalist work and was located in an ecology in which IR was a (somewhat marginal) branch of political science. This often generated a defensive posture from those seeking to apply sociological insights to IR. European IR operated in a more free-range space, both intellectually and institutionally—as such, it took up a more assertive stance. Indeed, during this period, European IR

sought to formally generate a distance from North American currents, as in the development of the *European Journal of International Relations*, the reconvening of the English School as a "non-American" theoretical tradition (Buzan 2001), and similar developments. Over time, these differences became more pronounced. Perhaps most notably, norms came to dominate the second, "conventional" stream of research. In Kratochwil's rendering, norms were associated with practical and legal reasoning, and there was explicit emphasis on the coexistence or conflict between norms. This conceptualization of norms was not necessarily at odds with post-structural contributions about, for example, the evolving features of sovereignty (Bartelson 1995) or the need to rethink the concept of security (Wæver 1995; Hansen 1997). However, the research that came to dominate North American sociological enquiry from the late 1990s drew on a particular interpretation of norms as specifying the intersubjectively shared character of world politics. Here, norms were seen as standards for appropriate behavior, and political change (such as changes in states' interests) was explained by new norms being internalized by actors, thereby changing their interests (Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein 1996; Adler 1997; cf. Sending 2016). Scholars associated with this form of constructivism aimed to show how a focus on norms could fill in the variation left unexplained by rationalist approaches (e.g. Finnemore 1996; Legro 1996; Tannenwald 1999; Wendt 1999, 142). In particular, debates over which "logics of action"—consequences, appropriateness, and deliberation—dominated world politics became a central axis of research (March and Olsen 1998; Risse 2000; Zürn and Checkel 2005).

Some argued that this attempt to reconcile constructivism and rationalist scholarship was problematic, seeing it as a taming of the intellectual and political possibilities that emerged from the use of political sociology within IR. These concerns included the conceptualization of norms by constructivist work (Epstein 2011) and the failure to take language sufficiently seriously in understanding the constitution of political subjects (Guillaume 2002). For others, critique came from what was seen as a failure to explore the full implications of the meta-theoretical commitments of the social construction of knowledge and the social construction of reality (cf. Guzzini 2000), particularly in terms of unearthing the political stakes in scholarly work (C.A.S.E. collective 2006), the construction of the international as a distinct political space (Jabri 2014), and the relational constitution of actor-hood (Jackson and Nexon 1999).

These critiques formed a central role in the development of a self-consciously "IPS" strain of research, which looked to pursue political sociological commitments in order to rethink core tenets of the building blocks of IR as a discipline: power, the state, sovereignty, the international, and more. The Charter Document of IPS as a section within the ISA, dating from 2007, outlines the ways in which IPS is intended to "foster innovative epistemological, methodological, analytic and theoretical perspectives on aspects of international studies less central to state-centered, economic, diplomatic and other traditional approaches." For its part, the inaugural editors of *International Political Sociology*, which published its first issue in 2007, Didier Bigo and RBJ Walk

er (2007: 2–5), noted that: "thinking sociologically about politics and international relations" will allow a more "reflexive scholarship"; "a renewed emphasis on the study of practices"; and an emphasis on "the way knowledge, including empirical data, is constructed." Critiquing a discipline that is "recognizable as a product of specifically American and to some extent British traditions of analysis, in ways that raise suspicions about privilege, ethnocentricism, and hegemony," Bigo and Walker (2007: 1) sought to develop IPS through extensive dialogue with social theory.

These statements are broad and inclusive. And IPS scholarship has been true to its word. Of articles published in the journal *International Political Sociology*, the most common topics include issue areas that are rarely found in other IR journals: race, necro-politics, gentrification, coloniality, climate change, crime, anthropocene, microfinance, collective memory, and more. The journal has been highly innovative methodologically, particularly around the development of ethnographic procedures and visual forms of research, and pioneering in its attentiveness to novel sites of enquiry. The IPS Best Book Prize has been awarded to a wide range of authors representing diverse sub-fields (from political geography to historical sociology) and substantive issue areas (from tourism to queer politics). All of the teams who have edited the journal highlight its transdisciplinary intent, its commitment to intellectual pluralism, its desire to take IPS beyond the Anglosphere and Euro-Atlantic worlds, and its commitment to diverse scholarly concerns (Bigo and Walker 2007; Huysmans and Nogueira 2012; Lisle, Squire, and Doty 2017; Grayson and Grove 2022). In each of their statements, and in other milestone publications (e.g. Guillaume and Bilgin 2017), IPS is conceived as a field of enquiry that is fluid rather than closed, dynamic rather than static, and emergent rather than prescribed. As Kyle Grayson and Nicole Sunday Grove (2022: 3) write, IPS should not be a space that reflects the "boutique interests of an exclusive group of scholars." Rather, scholars should expect IPS to "morph and change so that it reflects the scholarship that pushes at its own disciplinary boundaries."

IPS, therefore, demonstrates considerable diversity in terms of the theoretical traditions it draws upon and the substantive issue areas it addresses, especially when compared to more conventional IR sub-fields. That said, like any scholarly endeavor, IPS scholarship contains hegemonic influences. At times, this is intentional. All of the major statements about IPS make clear its commitment to self-consciously critical, reflexive research. And, when identifying the intellectual roots of IPS, Guillaume and Bilgin (2017: 1) note that the field is "principally identified with the works of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu." This is borne out by articles published in *International Political Sociology*, which show that Foucault is the scholar featured most frequently in reference lists in 12 out of the 17 years of the journal's operation. Bourdieu is the third most prominently cited figure. In the *Routledge Handbook of International Political Sociology*, the two most cited figures are Bourdieu and Foucault. Of three forums in *International Political Sociology* that focus on a specific scholar, Foucault is featured in two of them; the journal's one special issue was on the work of Bourdieu. At other

times, these dynamics are unintentional. For example, despite the publication of calls for papers and abstracts in multiple languages, the acceptance of submissions in some non-English languages, and an IPS Global South Pre-Submission Scheme, two-thirds of the authors who have published in *International Political Sociology* are based in Europe and one-third have their institutional home in the United Kingdom. Only 10 per cent of articles published in the journal are from scholars with an institutional affiliation outside Europe, North America, and Oceania, figures that are almost identical to those in the *Routledge Handbook of International Political Sociology*. Despite high-profile attempts to extend the reach of IPS beyond the Euro-Atlantic world, the approach—as with others in IR—is embedded within a field of practice that remains structured around and through these geographies, albeit (in the case of IPS) with a center of gravity residing in Europe rather than North America.

Since its emergence as an intellectual project in the 1980s and its institutional formalization in the 2000s, therefore, IPS has developed into an explicitly critical approach, centered in Europe, and oriented around a particular ethos and set of figures. These operating parameters are being increasingly contested by the emergence of novel insights, issue areas, and methodologies. We hope that this handbook contributes to this conversation about the shape and edges of IPS. As discussed above, the "two worlds" of sociologically informed IR have become distanced over the past generation. This is exemplified by work on practices. Initially, IPS work on practices was linked to the "linguistic" turn and research on discourse (e.g. Neumann 2002). As it developed, it focused more explicitly on the concept of practice generated by Bourdieu (e.g. Pouliot 2008; Bigo 2011; Adler-Nissen 2011; Adler and Pouliot 2011). At times (e.g. Schatzki, Knorr Cetina, and von Savigny 2001), advocates drew from a wider range of theoretical perspectives, including structuration theory (e.g. Dessler 1989), ethnomethodology (e.g. Nair 2021), and pragmatism (e.g. Pratt 2020). If some of this work pitched itself as contributing to what was, at least outside North America, considered to be mainstream IR scholarship (e.g. Adler and Pouliot 2011), at other times, it was more self-consciously critical (e.g. Doty 1997). Either way, work on practices show how similar intellectual points of origin can be, and often have been, mobilized in different ways for different purposes.

Our view is that this does not have to be the case, and it may not be a particularly productive as a way of conceiving IPS. At the very least, the question of whether there are, or should be, "two worlds" of IPS is something we think it is worth asking afresh. As such, this handbook explores what might be gained from seeing IPS as a myriad of perspectives within a transnational field of politically sociological inquiry into the changing nature of world politics—and its current sense of conjunctural crisis.

"The international"

IPS scholars broadly agree that world politics encompasses the transboundary encounters that serve as points of interaction across political borders, whether these are represented by states, regions, empires, urban formations, or frontiers and whether these encounters take the form of emulation, exchange, coercion, or comparable processes. A core feature of IPS, therefore, is its critique of "methodological nationalism"—the view that the boundaries of social relations map directly onto the boundaries of the nation-state and that nation-states are the natural units of scholarly analysis (Wimmer and Schiller 2002). IPS scholarship argues that there is no distinct "international system" and no pre-determined primary unit within it. Rather, the boundaries of the international are historically contingent and subject to dynamics of emergence, reproduction, and contestation (e.g. Walker 1993; Bartelson 2023). At the same time, IPS scholarship has sought to highlight the ways in which important, yet often overlooked, dimensions of world politics (such as racism, colonialism, sexism, and other systems of stratification) have engendered regimes of exploitation, inequality, and debasement. By "decentering" power away from the modern nation-state and by recentering enquiry on actors (including "everyday" actors) who contest forms of domination; by widening issue areas to include economic, ecological, and humanitarian regimes; and by explicitly confronting the co-implication of normative and scholarly commitments (e.g. Huysman and Nogueira 2016: 302; Walker 1993, 1997; Bigo and Walker 2007; Guzzini 2005), IPS has been conceived as an intellectual sign around which a range of research agendas can be articulated.

To work within IPS is thus to embrace the argument that the boundaries of the international are assembled, contested, and historically contingent. It also involves being attentive to the effects of invoking or claiming the international as a distinct social space that is qualitatively different from domestic societies. If IPS is, as noted above, concerned with the "transversal relations" that challenge the boundaries of political entities (Basaran et al. 2016), then IPS scholarship shares a concern with how these boundaries are created, how they are ordered, and under what conditions they are challenged.

"The political"

IPS therefore focuses on the study of power as it attends to the dynamics of transboundary order-making and contestation. As a result, all IPS scholarship is concerned with broadening existing understandings of power in IR, which have traditionally been associated with the distribution of resources and capabilities within the international system. Most mainstream approaches ally this focus on capabilities with a Weberian (1978 [1922]: 278)-inspired definition of power (*macht*): "the probability that an actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests." In short: those with greater resources and capabilities are able to translate their

advantages into favorable outcomes. In contrast to this understanding, IPS scholarship maintains that power is a multifaceted phenomenon: it can be seen in the ways in which language constitutes interests (e.g. Epstein 2008) and in how forums of global governance exert "capillary" power in which subjects are disciplined without the overt deployment of either capabilities or "will" (e.g. Sending and Neumann 2006). In part, such notions of power also draw on Weber (1978 [1922]: 278), who saw power as closely bound up with domination (*herrschaft*): "the probability that a command within a given specific context will be obeyed by a given group of persons." Power, for Weber, was both a capacity to achieve goals through the organization and mobilization of resources *and* a means by which to set the rules of the game, ensure that certain issues do not reach agendas, or prevent others from articulating their interests (also see Lukes 2005). In this sense, power is both the capacity to directly affect others and the capacity to make decisions appear to be "natural" or "right."

As all international orders are made up of multiple political units, establishing order is an enduring point of tension in world politics. This makes contestation, whether through revolutions, social movements, or everyday protest endemic features of IR. This generates questions about how power is organized, who claims power, and how power is legitimized. It also stimulates investigation of changes in time and space into what constitutes power—in other words, how existing forms of power are challenged, reconfigured, and sometimes overturned. This ranges from explorations of corporeal power (Axster and Danewid, this volume) that operate on and through individual actors via research on the productive power of discourses (Alberts, this volume), to discussions of the symbolic power (Hoffmann, this volume), which resides in images, narratives, and signs (Callahan, this volume).

The "sociological"

As Bigo and Walker (2007: 2) make clear, IPS seeks to expand IR's interdisciplinarity by bringing it into explicit dialogue with sociology: "We are especially conscious of the relative absence of sociological traditions in the most influential analyses of international relations." To approach IR through the lens of IPS is to think of IR as constituting a social space constituted by actors, their interactions, and their patterning in the form of social structures. By bringing sociology formally into the study of world politics, IPS can "frame more precisely the debates on the themes concerning social practices, their relations to norms and institutions. …, the emergence of transnational networks …, and the transformation of domination and inequality when domination emancipates from the territorial weberian state and the westphalian era" (ISA–IPS Section, n.d.).

Just as IR stands to benefit from a deeper recognition of sociological traditions, IPS stresses that sociological traditions, too, benefit from engagement with IR scholarship (e.g. Bigo and Walker, 2007: 1–2). At times, by importing the "great theorists" of

sociology into IR, scholars have suggested, perhaps unintentionally, that IR is the product of sociological inquiry rather than productive of it. This does insufficient justice to the ways in which world politics is a significant social space in and of itself, one that has often been overlooked by disciplinary sociology (Rosenberg 2006, 2016; Rosenberg and Kurki 2021). Much of the contemporary discipline of sociology is concerned with "internal" dynamics that take place within nation-states (Go and Lawson 2017). Challenging this assumption of "internalism" and its corollary, "methodological nationalism," is a central task of IPS.

Over the past decade, a range of sociological approaches have been imported into IR, some of which set out to challenge internalism and methodological nationalism. Social network approaches, inspired by the work of George Simmel, Norbert Elias, and John Padgett, have used this approach to study issue areas ranging from human rights to financial systems (e.g. Montgomery, this volume; Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery 2009). Pragmatists drawing on the work of John Dewey have analyzed topics from military basing to the end of the gold standard (e.g. Pratt 2020; Jabko and Schmidt 2021; Schmidt 2014). Others have drawn extensively from the work of Charles Tilly and his collaborators on contentious politics, using their insights to examine revolutions (Lawson 2019), great power politics (Goddard, MacDonald, and Nexon 2019), and more. Work in historical IR has shown how world orders are profoundly social, resting on historically contingent processes and interactions in which dynamics of transboundary order-making and contestation take center stage. Such a view opens up a historical canvass that extends well beyond the contemporary global order, including to periods with quite different forms of social organization (Buzan and Lawson 2015; Phillips and Sharman 2015; Phillips 2022).

If the influence of sociology on IR is mapped in this way, it is clear that the relationship between sociology and IR is more significant and multifaceted than is often taken to be the case, including by those working within IPS. In our view, IPS would be well served by taking part in an ongoing dialogue with these approaches. Taking this ecumenical approach, we argue, is the most productive way of demonstrating the intellectual promise of IPS, while simultaneously extending its agenda.

Meta-foundations

This volume, therefore, sees IPS as concerned with any social relations, processes, and mechanisms that operate or are deployed politically across borders. This is a wide remit and necessarily raises the question of whether there is much, or any, IR theory that stands outside IPS. If we are going to relax the assumption of IPS as a self-consciously critical sub-field premised on a specific ontology and set of epistemological commitments and organized around a particular set of theorists and issue areas, then we need to find other ways of connecting work that is identified as IPS. With that in mind,

we propose that "doing IPS" is based on three foundational commitments: relationalism, intersubjectivity, and historicism. These are broad commitments, and they are typically interpreted and put to work in different ways, which in turn shapes substantive engagements, as well as the forms of critique that are characteristic of IPS.

Relationalism

As Julian Go and Daniel Nexon (this volume) write in their lead chapter, "relationalism holds that, as the name implies, relations make up social and political life. It emphasizes the causal and constitutive role played by the web of interactions, transactions, and relationships that connect actors and other social sites." Relationalism makes two intertwined claims: first, that relations are the ontological substrata of the social world; and second, that causal processes are embedded within interactions, shaping actors, action, and outcomes.

The counterpoint to relationalism is "substantialism." Substantialist approaches begin with fixed entities, usually either structures (such as the international system) or agents (such as states). Within this grouping are "holists," scholars that start "with an analytical primitive of the social system or structure, which is imbued with essential and enduring characteristics" (Go and Nexon, this volume). Structural realists, for example, locate the causes of state behavior and outcomes in an anarchic structure and the distribution of power (Waltz 1979; Parent forthcoming). For their part, world-systems theorists point to the determinate properties of global capitalist accumulation (e.g. Agnew 2021). Constructivists expand structures to include ideational factors but also rely on fixed structural entities, most notably norms (e.g. Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2020; Wiener 2018). In contrast, "individualist" theories maintain that behavior and outcomes are best explained in terms of individual attributes and the "preferences, perceptions, or beliefs" of specific actors. These actors are often individual human beings, as in rational-choice scholarship, which builds theories premised on the assumption of individuals as utility-maximizing actors (e.g. Fearon 2005) or psychological theories, which highlight individual perceptions and cognition as the root causes of behavior and outcomes (see e.g. Kertzer and Tingley 2018; McDermott 2019; Saunders 2011). In other cases, collectives are treated as single actors, be they states, empires, firms, or classes.

Relationalism, in contrast, begins with the proposition that entities are not fixed but made up of relations of various kinds and intensities. It is thus the task of analysts "to grasp the process through which such relations are aggregated and used to stabilize and reify some other relations as making up an entity or thing" (Sending, Pouliot, and Neumann 2015: 7). In the short run, actors can appear as fixed entities, with definable interests and intentions. But in the medium and long term, actors emerge, change, and sometimes disappear by virtue of the relations that produce them (Jackson and Nexon 1999; Padgett and Powell 2012). This insight may seem intuitive when we are talking about

collective actors—after all, we can plausibly think of states, empires, international organizations, and firms as collections of relations. But in its strongest form, relationalism also suggests that individuals are inseparable from the social relations that constitute them. In this sense, actors do not "have" identities and interests; rather, these are shaped and reshaped through social interactions. At the same time, relations give rise to structures: anarchical and hierarchical orders, normative and discursive formations, systems of racism and patriarchy, and more. Neither agents nor structures are separable from social interactions (see Emirbayer 1997; Go and Krause 2016; Tilly 1998).

This understanding opens up space for exploring a fundamentally social view of agency. If all social action takes place within relatively fixed configurations of social ties, there is considerable variation in terms of whether agency is seen as containing a degree of autonomy from these social ties (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1996: 364; Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 48–49) or whether agency is something that is performed through social structures and associated scripts (Weber 1998; Ringmar 2016). For both positions, however, there is no nonstructured action that is free from social ties, just as there is no social structure that is free from dynamics of emergence, reproduction, and contestation. For relational scholars, social life takes place in "structured contexts of action" (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1996: 372)—fields of practice formed by configurations of events and experiences. This does not preclude analyses that focuses on relatively stable institutional configurations: bureaucracies, states, forms of international administration, and so on. What it does preclude is defining these entities by listing their attributes as if these were not susceptible to dynamics of emergence, reproduction, and contestation and carrying out research as if these dynamics were not central to their make-up and behavior. For IPS scholarship, it is relations "all the way down."

In practice, relational scholarship varies considerably in the extent to which it applies these insights. Much analysis starts with a pre-existing actor or structure that then interacts and transforms over time. Some of these approaches are careful to signal that these are analytical and not ontological assumptions, relying on relational language like "social sites," "assemblages," or "configurations" to indicate the transient nature of entities (Tilly 2005; Pratt 2020; Bell and Holmqvist this volume). Beyond these ontological first-order claims lies an epistemological argument: the causal processes and mechanisms driving social behavior and outcomes are embedded in relations. We can productively contrast this claim with more mainstream approaches where, as Andrew Abbott (2001: 39) explains, "the social world consists of fixed entities (the units of analysis) that have attributes (the variables)."

In this Handbook, contributors cover four main approaches to relational theorizing, all of which share a central commitment to relationalism and a processual approach to understanding and explanation, but differ in terms of how they operationalize these orientations. Marylou Hamm, Frédéric Mérand, and Anke Obendiak, for example,

follow Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam (2012: 9) in defining fields as "constructed mesolevel social order[s] in which actors … are attuned to and interact with one another on the basis of shared … understandings about the purpose of the field, relationships to others in the field …, and the rules governing legitimate action in the field." Fields, in this view, are relational and holist at once. Alexander Montgomery's chapter hones in on social network analysis, warning that some of the methodological choices these theorists adopt risk stripping relationalism from network theory. Colleen Bell and Caroline Holmqvist's contribution focuses on assemblage theory. As Bell and Holmquist explain, in assemblage thinking, the social world is understood as a "patchwork of heterogenous and fluid configurations that, in turn, form part of other configurations … assemblage thinking requires that we accept that the social has indeterminate properties that are unstable and indefinite." Finally, Paul MacDonald outlines a "relational-realist approach," with a particular emphasis on repertoires, which draws on the contentious politics tradition in order to argue that IR scholars should use repertoires to understand a variety of activities, from the behavior of armed groups in civil wars to the development of transnational social movements and the diplomatic interactions of states.

As Go and Nexon note, these approaches are far from exhaustive. Elements of relational analysis can also be found in discourse analysis, especially when concerned with how configurations of meaning produce conditions of possibility for agency and action (Bially Mattern 2004). Both actor-network theory and new materialist approaches can also be seen as relational (e.g. Nexon and Pouliot 2013; Lundborg and Vaughn-Williams 2015). So too are pragmatist approaches, which replace the figure of the human being as a processor of information with a creative actor embedded in an ordered social context (Cochran 2002; Friedrichs and Kratochwil 2009; Pratt 2020). As a result, this Handbook only begins to explore the potential significance of relational work to IPS scholarship.

Intersubjectivity

Our second meta-commitment is intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity characterizes a broad range of IR scholarship, well beyond what we tend to identify as explicitly IPS work, including, notably, some of the constructivist scholarship we referenced in previous sections. Early contributions that engaged the intersubjective character of politics, and social phenomena more generally, focused on how norms shaped actors' identity (Finnemore 1996) and on the insight that structural features of international politics, such as anarchy, is "what states make of it" (Wendt 1992). Today, IPS scholarship tends to treat intersubjectivity as both fundamental and, at the same time, contingent. It is fundamental because work in IPS often sees intersubjectivity as running "all the way down" to the constitution of actors as subjects. This is what is at stake in the shift from the "individual" to the "subject," in which the subject is a product of the

social (Epstein and Jackson, this volume). In this understanding, it is the social (i.e. relations between social sites) that produces the subject. Yet, some IPS work sees intersubjectivity as contingent in that it is not produced or has consequences through a ready-made, external "structure" but is performed, enacted, and made sense of through agency.

From this commitment to intersubjectivity emerges, as Epstein and Jackson note in their lead chapter, an approach to "actorhood as an *empirical* rather than an ex ante *theoretical* question." For Epstein and Jackson, intersubjectivity is analyzed through the investigation of different practices and forms of meaning-making. This view entails a conceptualization of political agency as flowing from the intersubjective processes through which subjects become self-conscious and recognized by others (Epstein, Lindemann, and Sending 2018). Combined in this way with a commitment to relationalism, a focus on intersubjectivity entails a particular view of social structure in which stability and order emerge from processual dynamics.

Exactly how this intersubjective wager is operationalized varies between IPS approaches. In some versions, intersubjectivity is a point of departure for a focus on the emergence or changing meaning of governance objects (Stampnitzky 2013). In other, perhaps more prominent, versions of IPS, the specific workings of intersubjectivity are the central focus of analysis. Work on discourse, particularly that influenced by Foucault, has been especially prominent in IPS, examining how discursive formations produce subject-positions and define what can and cannot be said and done (Neumann 1999; Hansen 2006: Aalberts, this volume). Others take the same core insight and mobilize the concept of practices, defined in terms of "socially meaningful bundles of activities" (Schatzki 2012) or as "competent performances" (see Adler-Nissen, this volume). Here, a concern for intersubjectivity generates a focus on concrete sites of inquiry, such as diplomatic negotiations. This understanding also features prominently in analyses of performances and performativity (see Jestrovic and Rai, this volume), which brings out the ways in which intersubjective structures are rendered concrete through the performance of meaningful acts that are recognized as such by others. In his chapter, Thomas Lindemann offers a different vantage point, concentrating on the concept of misrecognition to explore how the inherent ambiguities and instability in social relations give rise to tension and politicization, both within and between intersubjectively shared understandings.

This view of intersubjectivity is also mobilized at different scales, including explorations of changing conceptions of sovereignty (Bartelson 1995), the conditions of possibility for the performance of political agency (Ashley 1984; Weldes and Duvall, this volume), and interest in how actors' identities and political outlooks change over time as a result of either normative or epistemic changes (Sending 2015; Allan 2018). From this emerges an important historical sensibility, which translates into an interest in exploring how political orders are underpinned by the fixing of meaning and how these emerge, are reproduced, and challenged. Herein lies the denaturalizing orientation

common to IPS scholarship, which is oriented around the emergence and transformation of what often appear to be static, solid "things."

Historicism

Our final meta-commitment is *historicism*. Historicism is a warrant to historically locate practices and dynamics, a concern for the contingent, disruptive, constitutive impact of historical events and processes, and a study of contextualized rationalities and intersubjectivities. To say that IPS has an "historicist" sensibility is not to say that either the substance or the methods of IPS are necessarily interpretative; to the contrary, it is a sensibility that lends itself to a range of methods and methodologies. What historicism does preclude is a commitment to invariant causal models, which assume a stable set of variables with effects that can be generalized across time and space. To adopt an historicist sensibility means accepting that causal work is neither invariant nor universal but operates through the contextual interaction of events, processes, and mechanisms. Unlike much IR theory, causation in IPS is not associated with regularity-deterministic accounts that establish associations between objects that are separated (or at least separable) in space and time (Kurki 2006: 192). Indeed, rather than disaggregate entities into discrete properties, the focus of this volume is on the relational interconnections that constitute entities in the first place. In this sense, causal work in IPS rests on generating an "intelligible connection" between "closely related bundles" of events and practices (Kurki and Suganami 2012: 404; also see Humphreys and Suganami 2024).

The lead chapter in this section, by Tarak Barkawi, Duncan Bell, and Ayşe Zarakol, takes up this challenge. Seeking to mediate "the specific" and "the general" through examining central concerns in IR, such as war and state formation, the authors show the necessity of being attentive not just to particular histories and changing social formations but also to historiographies that show us that "the past is not stable," existing "only relative to the questions we ask of it in the present." This provocation is taken on by other contributors to this section. Eren Duzgun demonstrates how the (to date) relatively slight engagement between IPS and historical sociology can be enhanced through attentiveness to non-Eurocentric, multi-linear, pluri-temporal accounts of historical development (see also Krishna 2017; Seth 2016). In his contribution, Brieg Powel takes this approach further back in time and space by "historicizing the global", seeing history as "a smorgasbord of relations, experiences, practices and forms of political organization" over many thousands of years. Brieg's "decentred" approach to history aims to challenge tendencies in IPS toward presentism and "monotemporality" (the co-location of the modern with the West), pushing at the edges of where and when we find IPS. Hendrik Spruyt engages with anthropological work on practices, performances, and gifts in outlining the "fusion of horizons" that enable international orders to emerge, be sustained, and (over time) challenged. Jeanne Morefield's

contribution shows how a "norm against noticing" imperialism in IR has "unseen" key developments in world politics, particularly around US interventionism. Morefield, following Edward Said, puts empire "back at the center of things," responding to the lead chapter's request for IPS to more closely link historical inquiry with theoretical diagnosis. In the closing chapter in this part, Meera Sabaratnam highlights the colonial character of contemporary world politics and IR, including IPS, and draws attention to an urgent need for decolonizing, including the work of IPS's most prominent inspirations: Foucault (also see Howell and Richter-Montpetit 2018) and Bourdieu (also see White 2021). IPS, Sabaratnam argues, has focused too much "on the productive character of liberal-modern power structures, rather than dwelling with and alongside the concrete political struggles taking place from below." The challenge, she contends, is to join in a "productive and reflexive engagement in which our understanding of the myriad forms and instruments of modern power can be animated by a shared sense of struggle against the alienation produced by its colonial form."

Our commitments to relationalism, intersubjectivity, and historicism are not chosen arbitrarily. Indeed, this volume is intended to show that these commitments are fundamental to analyzing how social formations in world politics are created, sustained, and transformed. Our vision of IPS, therefore, sees it as a network in which our three meta-commitments act as a central node, with various approaches linking to it, sometimes strongly, at other times at more of a remove. One of the central tasks of this volume is to map the "network structure" of IPS, exploring how different approaches adopt these meta-commitments. In doing so, we hope to invite others to reflect on this mapping in a dialogue about how IPS has developed to date and will continue to evolve. After all, as we note above, IPS is not a closed field of enquiry but one that is itself relationally configured and contested.

Social stuff

In the second half of the Handbook, we examine the ways in which IPS and its meta-commitments generate interventions into a range of issue areas. There is, of course, no way that a handbook can be exhaustive in detailing how scholars "do" IPS. IPS scholarship engages with every sub-field in IR. In similar vein, IPS scholars study a wide range of topics, from migration to militarism, speculative fiction to logistics, sonics to diplomacy. There is very little, if anything, substantively that escapes the purview of IPS. To bring some coherence to this diverse scene, we have organized this section of the Handbook around questions of order and change in world politics. The issue of order cuts across subjects and disciplines. If sociological theory from Parsons to Foucault is bound up with the persistence (or not) of social orders, as Christian Reus-Smit and Ann Towns argue in their lead chapter, IR has also been "drawn inexorably to questions of international order for theoretical and historical reasons." IR

theorists attempt to understand a host of "ordered" phenomenon, including the persistence of global economic regimes, the rise and decline of security institutions, and the endurance (or not) of world orders.

Other contributions to this section demonstrate the many ways in which the meta-commitments outlined in the first half of the Handbook impact the character and content of international orders. The chapter by Jorg Kustermans focuses on *rule*, drawing "attention to how international order is anchored in particular actors or social groups—or at least that international order is assumed or perceived to be anchored in them." Rule describes situations in which an actor dominates other actors, hence "rulers command, while the ruled obey (or risk suffering the consequences when they do not)." Kustermans outlines several theses about the operation of rule, which he applies to nineteenth-century colonial orders. Of all of the orders underpinning the contemporary international system, orders of sovereignty and capital are, perhaps, the most enduring. As Arjun Chowdhury argues in his chapter, "Sovereignty is a concept that is seen as simultaneously central to IR theory and so historically variable as to be meaningless." To capture sovereignty in any meaningful sense requires understanding it as "relational on two dimensions, between ruler and ruled, and between rulers" and seeing that these relations entail "intersubjective understandings that regulate relationships, and, as those intersubjective understandings change over time, sovereignty is historically variable." In her chapter on capital orders, Lisa Tilley argues that we must understand the contemporary neoliberal economic order as "a direct response to the powerful global shifts instigated by waves of decolonisation." As colonial movements grew, neoliberals "diverted the post-War rights project toward making a case for constructing legal international structures to protect finance capital flows from the collective will of movements and Southern governments."

As we argued in the previous section, one of the strengths of IPS is that it pushes conventional IR theory into underexplored areas of inquiry. The final three chapters of this section follow this path by examining racial, gendered, and spatial orders, respectively. Clive Gabay traces the formation and transformation of "racial grammars" that stratify world politics, arguing that these grammars produce racialization and racism as a set of violent logics, structures that have to be both "malleable and flexible in order to persist and survive through various modes of resistance, anti-racism and decolonisation." Laura Sjoberg draws a critical distinction between "gender orders," where the primary structuring principle is gender (as with many public restrooms), and "gendered orders," "where something else is a or even the primary distributional principle, and yet gender still plays a key role in the ways that the order is implemented and expressed." Finally, Joanne Yao shows the ways in which IPS can break new ground in even the oldest of literatures. Space has long been at the center of IR theory. Going back to work at the turn of the twentieth century by Alfred Mahan and Halford MacKider, geography has sometimes been seen as determining actors' behavior. Yao shows how dominant spatial configurations are "held in place by power, and these

configurations have consequences for legitimacy, authority, and the distribution of resources." She stresses the ways in which her form of IPS does not reduce space to discourse but instead shows how the co-constitution of ideas and materiality lies at the core of modern spatial orders.

The next three sections turn from order to change, examining how, when, where, and by whom orders of various kinds are contested. In their lead chapter for the section on "resistance," Jef Huysmans and João Pontes Nogueira point out that "IPS work uses resistance as a key concept for analysing societies, politics, and the international less than it does technologies and techniques of arranging and reproducing order." Using a dual conception of power that "combines a horizontal view of conflicts between forces with a hierarchical understanding of relations of domination," Huysmans and Nogueira highlight transgressive forms of politics that "fracture" resistance (as in the anti-globalization movements of the 1990s), "situationalist" approaches that examine "uncoordinated instances of protest" (as in the blocking of borders by migrants), and entanglements—or "folds"—across borders that form "transversal alliances" (as in refugees taking part in tactics of de-subjugation). In the process, they emphasize the centrality of transgressive politics to IPS.

These insights are engaged closely in other contributions to this section. Debbie Lisle's chapter focuses on transversal, "micropolitical practices of bordering" that evolve and mutate, sometimes into durable (if never static) formations. The frictions that lie behind these processes are explored, Lisle outlines, in IPS scholarship on migration, citizenship, and infrastructures. Xavier Guillaume and Nicolas Lemay-Hébert take on the metaphor of "the game" in exploring the forms of "everyday resistance" that can be found in world politics, including peacebuilding operations. Guillaume and Lemay-Hébert develop Ashis Nandy's idea of the "nonplayer" to show how games, or dynamics of domination and resistance, feature not only players and counter-players but also "nonplayers"—those who reject the rules and expectations of the game itself. Eric Selbin's contribution uses Huysman and Noguiera's framework to explore the ways in which revolution "needs to be resituated and reconsidered in an entangled, figurative zone of awkward engagement(s)." Selbin's "folksonomic" approach examines the changing ways in which peoples around the world have banded together in the hope that, as Delroy Wilson put it, "better must come." Håkan Thörn, in his chapter on "ecological resistance," makes a powerful case for combining approaches rooted in governmentality with those drawn from social movements and revolutions in arguing that ecological resistance should be understood as a "politics of responsibility" based around the possibilities of progress(es), revolution(s), and emancipation(s). The final chapter in this section, by Jean-François Drolet, focuses on "conservative resistance." Drolet traces the filaments of "new right" thought over several decades, arguing that today's "radical right" is "the product of a decades-long attempt to craft an intellectual, cultural and political project capable of fostering resistance against liberal orders by explaining what is unsatisfactory with the current

social reality, identifying the agents of change, and providing norms for criticism and practical goals for transformation." The result, Drolet observes, is a potent political force.

The third sub-section opens up issues around the many faces of power, going beyond the binary of material and ideational to examine the social sources of power, whether in "hard cases" (such as military force) or through particular networks (such as experts). As noted above, the concept of power is as central to IPS scholarship as it is to the broader field of IR. But IPS work on power typically starts from, and is motivated by, questions about what constitutes power, how it is wielded, and how it varies across time and space. For example, debates in IR that focus on the nature of hegemony and revisionism tend to see power as a stable, measurable resource (e.g. Beckley 2018). In contrast, IPS scholarship explores the ways in which power changes over time, and the dynamics by which it undergirds and stabilizes political orders.

In their lead chapter, Stefano Guzzini and Jimmy Casas Klausen discuss the various dimensions of power and emphasize the importance of being cognizant of what is assumed in exploring these multiple dimensions and their effects. The chapter by Sabrina Axster and Ida Danewid focus on the ways in which corporeal power challenges claims within both IR and IPS in terms of how power should be studied, and understood, from the vantage point of marginalized groups. Stephanie Hofmann explores the uses and potential, but also the limits, of the concept of symbolic power developed most comprehensively by Pierre Bourdieu. In a similar vein, Matthew Eagleton-Pierce discusses how economic power rests on a range of symbolic resources, stressing how this generates potential links between IPS and International Political Economy (IPE). In her chapter, Jennifer Spindel argues that military power rests on symbols and imaginaries of security and insecurity—in other words, the "social, symbolic, and constitutive processes that create military power."

The final section of the Handbook explores the various sites of IPS agency. Once again, our goal is to show how IPS can open up IR's theoretical and substantive agendas. In their lead chapter, Jutta Weldes and Bud Duvall challenge scholars to explore the constitution of agency across different scales of analysis. They note that the production of political subjects with forms of agency is both intertextual and intersectional, requiring us to be sensitive to historical changes and cognizant of diverse forms of power—and conceptualizations of politics—across time and place. In his chapter, Iver Neumann provides an analysis of the constitution and form of polities, ranging from tribes to empires, suggesting that emerging research on non-European polities can reduce Eurocentric tendencies within IR, including IPS. Annabelle Littoz-Monnet looks at the constitution of experts (those with politically salient agency) by exploring the macro-level operations of discourses, the meso-level relational configurations of specific actors, and the micro-level context of action. She explores the intertwining of these scales through a discussion of the constitution of "global experts." Ben Christian and Sebastian Schindler zoom in on the agency of international

organizations, exploring both macro-scale technocratic discourses and the ways in which uncertainty and contingency offer a distinct form of agency that is up for grabs at particular moments.

Conclusion

We close where we started—with global polycrisis. We hope that this introduction, and the chapters that follow, demonstrate the theoretical and substantive contributions that IPS makes to understanding contemporary world politics—and the multiple crises we are currently experiencing. Relationalism demonstrates the ways in which actors and structures are in flux, illuminating how they are reconstituted and transformed. Work on intersubjectivity frontloads questions about how actors define and understand times of crisis. A commitment to historicism demands that the present conjuncture is placed into context, focusing on how events and experiences of crisis emerge and are—or are not—patterned.

As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, IPS is unusually well placed to examine the contemporary polycrisis, both through work that speaks directly to and from its central agendas and also those that currently occupy a space arounds its margins. That said, if IPS is to continue to thrive as a vibrant, outward-facing, open-ended research agenda, should it query some of the ways it is currently constituted as a field of practice? If the answer to this question is yes, then the chapters that follow illustrate the possibilities that result from taking up this challenge. While they offer overviews of past debates and the origins of key concepts and theories, and demonstrate the depth of IPS scholarship into a wide array of issues, they also identify limitations and suggest avenues for future research. We very much hope that this volume prompts IPS scholarship, and all of those interested in its approach, to take up this challenge.

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PART I

RELATIONALISM

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS RELATIONALISM?

JULIAN GO AND DANIEL H. NEXON

INTRODUCTION

In February 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a "special military operation" to invade Ukraine and overthrow its President, Volodymyr Zelensky. Putin clearly expected little resistance; the Russian military engaged in a series of disorganized and inadequately supported attacks on Ukrainian officials—including ones who were likely on Moscow's payroll—mostly remained loyal to their government. Some 18 months later, as we are completing this chapter, analysts almost universally see Putin's decision as a mistake. It pushed Kyiv much further, and perhaps irrevocably so, toward Europe and away from Russia. The war appears headed toward stalemate. Even if Ukraine collapses—perhaps due to a lack of US and European aid—the Russian military will have suffered appalling casualties. Russia's economy, battered by unexpectedly comprehensive Western sanctions, is expected to contract by at least 8 percent over the next few years. Putin's control over the country appears less secure than at any time since 2012.

Why did Russia invade Ukraine? Most scholars view the war, on balance, as a case of Russian aggression. They point to a number of reasons for Putin's decision to attack Ukraine, such as his desire to restore Russian greatness and his commitment to a "sphere of privileged interest" in Russia's "near abroad." Some, however, blame the United States. They claim that Washington's policies—especially North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) expansion to the borders of the Russian Federation—gravely undermined Russia's security. Putin's invasion of Ukraine was, in this reading, essentially defensive: an effort to prevent a key "buffer state" from joining NATO and the European Union (Chotiner 2022).

This is obviously an important controversy. But despite their differences, these explanations have a lot in common. Each of them understands the invasion in terms of the beliefs, motivations, and reactions of key decision-makers. They tell a causal story that centers on a handful of actors—whether anthropomorphized states, leaders, or administrations—and how those characters interact over time. Their arguments rest on counterfactuals: a fictional version of the story in which some of the players made

different decisions, most notably a world where the United States had not expanded NATO.

Here, things start to become extremely thorny. Imagine a world in which the United States adopted very different policies toward Europe and Russia after the Cold War (including during the later 1990s and early 2000s). By the 2020s, such a world would almost certainly look very different from our own.

As Cheryl Rofer (2021) argues of NATO expansion, "three decades of concatenating changes imply a broad range of alternative outcomes," which require us to engage in more "detailed, and more imaginative, counterfactuals" in order to "think harder about the wisdom of NATO expansion." She points out, for example, that in the absence of NATO expansion, it is not implausible to imagine a Swedish-led defensive alliance including the Baltic States, Poland, and other Eastern European countries.

We can imagine other worlds as well. Would the European Union (EU) have expanded eastward in the absence of NATO expansion? Would NATO still exist at all? That is, we are potentially talking about major differences in regimes, borders, political leadership, international institutions, and relations among states. But participants in these debates tend to (implicitly) hold the essential characteristics of everyone, and everything, involved relatively constant. For most of those involved in the debate, a world without NATO expansion looks a lot like our own but with more or less war (cf. Jervis 1997).

The typical arguments found in these debates rest on *substantialist* assumptions—they assume a ready-made cast of actors and structures that we can hold constant while we vary interactions. But what if we start from a *relationalist* approach, in which *interactions* constitute and reconstruct the global political world itself?

In its most simple formulation, relationalism holds that, as the name implies, *relations* are the basic building blocks of social and political life. There are many different kinds of relationalists, but they all emphasize the causal and constitutive role played by, variously, the web of interactions, transactions, meanings, and exchanges that connect actors and other social sites.[1] Relationalists believe that interactions forge identities, generate interests, and allocate power. That is, relations produce—or, perhaps more accurately, "constitute" or "make up"—agents and social structures. The same is true of other social aggregates: organizations such as national-states, firms, and international institutions, and other social sites that we conventionally refer to as "systems," such as "the global economic system" and "the international system" (see E mirbayer 1997; Erikson 2013; Go and Krause 2016; Jackson and Nexon 1999; Jackson 2003, 2006; Mann 1986, 1993; Tilly 1998; White 1992).

This line of argument is not exactly alien to those who embrace a substantialist approach to studying world politics. Some agree that interactions or relations constitute actors, structures, and systems. Talcott Parsons, the "father" of structural functionalism, more than once described "structures" as, at least ontologically (i.e. in their essential nature), relative stabilities in patterns of interaction (Procter 1992: 15ff; see also Godd

ard and Nexon 2005; LaRoche and Pratt 2017), even if he ultimately conflated the "analytical status of his model with the condition of empirical society." That is, Parson came to think of "structures" and "systems" as concrete things, with needs and requirements, rather than as analytic shorthands (Alexander 1998: 50). Relationalists argue that scholars should avoid the same mistake that Parsons made. They recognize that there is no good way to avoid using analytic shorthand that makes dynamic relations sound like stable things. They know that it is simply impossible to construct theories, engage in research, or describe events and processes without holding some (read many, or even most) aspects of the world constant. But they agree that we should never forget that society (and culture, economics, and politics) is fundamentally in flux, and the *way* we theorize—the terms we use, the kinds of explanations we offer, and the premises we start with—should, as much as possible, reflect that.

For relationalists, it is only part of the story to recognize that the "stuff" of social and political life—such as identities, boundaries, units, systems, and individuals—originates with relations. They argue that the apparent stability of this "stuff," its durability, its "thingness," *depends* on ongoing transactional processes: social interactions, symbolic exchanges, practices, and other forces that figure prominently in different strands of relational thought. Much of what appears to us as "substantial" are instantiations of wider, complex patterns of relations; they are constantly forming and reforming, emerging and re-emerging, through those interactions.[2]

The chapters that follow this framing chapter explore different kinds of relational theories and specific forms of relational thought. Our task is broader. We aim to lay out key components of relational thought, some of its history, and its implications for studying International Political Sociology (IPS). We focus on how relationalism departs from holist and individualist social theories, especially in the context of International Relations (IR) theory. Along the way, we provide a sense of the topography of relationalist theories in world politics.

Relationalism as social ontology

Relationalism is a funny kind of "ism." It is not an ideology with a political program, it is not a single methodology, and it does not require a specific method. It is certainly not a cluster of theories of the kind IR scholars (erroneously) call "paradigms," such as realism and liberalism.[3]

Realist theories, for example, make broadly similar wagers about the basic features of international politics, such as the extent to which international institutions can reduce the likelihood of war. These wagers are distinctive from liberal theories, which share a more optimistic view of the transformative power of international organizations, international regimes, and global governance arrangements (see Jackson and Nexon 2009, 2013). This is not the case with relationalist theories. Specific kinds of relational

theory, of course, can *inform* the bets that a scholar makes about world politics. For instance, viewing IR as "networks of networks" inclines one to see the web of US alliances, partnerships, and military and diplomatic relations as more important to the global allocation of power than, say, a typical realist (see Cooley and Nexon 2013, 2016, 2020). But there is nothing about relationalism writ large that *requires*, or even *implies*, such a wager. It is entirely possible that a network approach might lead an analyst to conclude that alliances constrain and drain US power.

This is because relationalism is a *social ontology*: a set of claims about the basic "stuff" of theory and analysis. Relationalists share some core analytic dispositions, and they generally question the utility of the same (substantialist) theories. But that is about as far as it goes. This is why relationalists often use phrases that suggest more of a general orientation rather than a specific theoretical approach, such as "relational thought" or "relational sensibilities."

Relationalism, like any other social ontology, refers to a general way of thinking about, looking at, and analyzing the world; relationalists *favor* some forms of theorizing over others, but specific relational theories may prove incompatible. Relationalists spend no small amount of time arguing about which of their approaches are truer to relational sensibilities; or if some even qualify as genuinely "relational." These are precisely the kinds of debates we expect to see when scholars share a set of basic assumptions but adopt different theories and styles of research.

"So," you might be thinking right now, "what can I read for a comprehensive understanding of relationalism?" The answer is: "Good luck with that." Marxists have *Capital*. Realists have Hans Morgenthau's (1948) weighty *Politics among Nations* or E. H. Carr's (1946) somewhat slimmer *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. But there is no "classic" or "canonical" doorstop-sized book about relationalism in social sciences. However, there have been efforts to write comprehensive statements of relational thought. One candidate is Pierpaolo Donati's (2010) *Relational Sociology: A New Paradigm for the Social Sciences*, but that probably involves too many specific, and possibly ancillary, commitments to qualify.[4] Another is Nick Crossley's (2010) *Toward a Relational Sociology*. Charles Tilly's articulations of "relational realism" have no extended, definitive text; they are spread over multiple books and articles (see e.g. Tilly 1995, 1997, 1998, 2003). There are some other important efforts to craft general, relational social theories. Harrison White's (1992) *Identity and Control* comes to mind but, like other candidates, isn't the relational equivalent of the Little Red Book.

There have been a number of additional publications taking stock of relationalism in social theory (e.g. Dépelteau and Powell 2013) and a number of individual and collected works on relationalism that examine both the varieties and limits of relational thought as applied in the broader social sciences (see Crossley 2010; Dépelteau and Powell 2013). But it is probably an article, Mustafa Emirbayer's (1997) "Manifesto for a Relational Sociology," that comes closest to a consensus pick for the "key relationalist text." In particular, Emirbayer appears to have popularized the distinction between

"relationalism" (or "relationism") and "substantialism" (or "substantivism") in English-language social science. He also (re)introduced John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley's (1975 [1949]) trifold schema of "self-action" (substantialist), "interaction" (substantialist), and "transaction" (relational).

With respect to the field of IR, Jackson and Nexon (1999) offer an important statement of self-identified relational thought. Jackson and Nexon are explicitly derivative of Emirbayer's "Manifesto" and generally add little more than an IR specific gloss. But they do note a potentially important distinction between *relations-centered* and *process-centered* thinking (most "relationalists" claim to combine the two, implicitly or explicitly arguing that social relations are inherently processual). One might also look to the Chinese "relational" school of IR, which is most closely associated with mainland scholar Qin Yaqing (2016, 2018; see also Qin and Nordin 20 19; Ho 2019).

Relationalism versus substantialism

Most accounts of relational thought introduce its key wagers by comparing it to other approaches—that is, they adopt a relational approach to explaining relationalism.

We have already noted that scholars usually contrast relationalism with "substantialism." Substantialist approaches treat "substances" or "essences" as the basic building blocks of analysis. They view "units" and "actors" (and, sometimes, systems) as, first and foremost, "things." Substantialist thought assumes that units and actors as static in some fundamental sense; it assumes that the identity of units and actors does not, and indeed cannot, change as they act toward and react to one another. "Generally speaking," Tskeris (2013: 89) explains, "relationalism directly opposes the … substantialist framework where social reality is preferably described as, or uncritically reduced to, a dense and seamless constellation of things (*reification*) or essences (*essentialism*), which allegedly possesses a very wide range of 'intrinsic' or 'natural' properties." The scientific ontology of substantialism posits that the social world consists of durable and coherent entities that "possess emergent properties" such as "groups, nations, cultures, and other reified substances" (Emirbayer 1997: 283, 285).

Relationalists therefore treat *interactions*, *transactions*, or *relationships* as the basic building blocks of their analysis. These, in turn, give rise to entities and their identities. Relations are, at least analytically, prior to "states" (Jackson and Nexon 1999). In this sense, we can also productively compare relationalism to *holism* and *individualism*—which together represent the two most common clusters of substantialist theory in the traditional social sciences (see Crossley 2010: 7–10; Wendt 1994). Those well-versed in IR theory may recall that these are two of the major axes on Alexander Wendt's (1999: 26) "map" of social theory.[5] Wendt categorizes theories along two dimensions: not only individualism–holism but also materialism–idealism. For Wendt, the

materialism–idealism axis refers to the degree that theorists view material forces as "brute facts." On the "materialist" extreme, theorists argue that such "brute facts" have causal effects regardless of the meanings attached to them. Those on the "idealist" side view meanings as driving outcomes, and some contend that "material forces" only present themselves as such through the ideas that people have about them.

Relationalism is, according to some, agnostic about the "materialism–idealism" continuum. Others suggest that a genuinely relational approach implies rejecting the distinction between "materialism" and "idealism" altogether (cf. McCourt 2016, 2022). It might be more accurate to argue that the distinction between "materialism" and "idealism," at least as understood in mainstream IR theory, is not terribly salient to debates among relationalists. Relationalists tend to be more concerned with the distinction between "social" and "cultural" phenomenon—that is, between, on the one hand, the *forms* and *patterns* of interaction themselves and, on the other hand, the *content* or *meanings* associated with various social relations (see Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Erikson 2013).

Relationalists disagree with one another about the extent to which Georg Simmel (1971: 25) was correct when he argued that, although in "any given social phenomenon, content and societal form constitute one reality," it remains the case that, first, we can treat them as analytically distinct and, second, explain a great deal without reference to cultural content. In Simmel's (1971: 26) words,

> superiority, subordination, competition, division of labor … and innumerable similar features are found in the state as well as in a religious community, in a band of conspirators as in an economic association, in an art school as in a family. However diverse the interests that give rise to these sociations, the forms in which the interests are realized are identical.

The distinction between social and cultural phenomena does not map particularly well onto the material–ideal continuum, which, to be frank, gets used in some pretty strange ways in IR (see Goddard and Nexon 2016; Nexon and Pouliot 2013). IR relations scholars often refer to economic wealth and military capabilities as "material" forces. During the "paradigm wars" of the 1990s and 2000s, it was not uncommon for realists to refer to military capabilities as "material power" and quip that no one is a social constructionist when staring down the barrel of a tank. No one doubts that economies and militaries are comprised of a great many tangible things, and we think it is pretty clear that the physical properties of those things matter. Lumber is a much less efficient energy source than coal. Burning coal emits carbon dioxide; photovoltaic cells do not. Shells made of depleted uranium maintain their shape better than ones made of tungsten steel when impacting armor, and thus penetrate armored vehicles more effectively (Schmid and Wirz 2000). One cannot create a practical nuclear weapon using hydrocarbons as fissile material. But these "brute facts" only come into play as "wealth" or "military power" through social and cultural processes. Without social forms, such as corporations and factories, tanks would not exist; tanks cannot be

"military capabilities" in the absence of complex social organizations to employ them (Goddard and Nexon 2016: 6). If we do not place much weight on the cultural content of those organizations—on the ideas and meanings that help constitute them—it does not necessarily follow that we must place more weight on "material forces." We might, in fact, privilege social dynamics.

In this sense, relations always have material components. Even signs and symbols have physical properties. If we want to treat them as analytically distinct, it is possible to focus on the "material" or the "ideational" dimensions of relations, or to build theories about how they interact with one another. But disagreements about the wisdom of such approaches are, at least in principle, orthogonal to the distinction between relational and nonrelational theories or, more accurately, "more relational" and "less relational" theories.

The holism–individualism continuum, on the other hand, is directly relevant to relationalism.

Holism

Holism starts with social systems or structures. It imbues these with essential and enduring characteristics. Holists claims that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts," with its own logic and inherent properties. They then explain social events or processes by fitting them into this system. Holist theories often focus on whether such events and processes are *functional* (or *dysfunctional*) with respect to the system's internal logic; alternatively, holists treat events or processes as outcomes of the logic of systems and structures.

Influential structuralist social theories of the early-to-mid-twentieth century advocated this way of thinking. Examples included the early musings on social structure by Emile Durkheim, the linguistic structuralism of Ferdinand Saussure, the structural anthropology of Radcliffe Brown, and the structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons (Crossley 2010: 7–8). Consider Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic structuralism, which looks, in important respects, like a relational theory. Many consider Saussure the father of linguistics because he, unlikely his predecessors, isolated the "linguistic system" as an entity that has its own internal logics; this, in turn, justified studying language as an object in its own right. For Saussure, the meaning of a sign (like a word) does not derive from the thing it refers to but to its difference from other signs in the system. The word "cat" has the meaning of "cat" because it is not "dog" (cf. Fletcher 1987). Therefore, any parts of the system (in this case, words) should be analyzed only in terms of their difference from other words in the system.

The claim that signs only have meaning through their difference from other signs is a textbook example of a relational principle. So why does Saussure's structuralism constitute a form of holism? Saussure believed that we must always analyze words as

part of a bigger whole: the linguistic system (or *langue*). *Langue* is a singular autonomous thing in its own right. It is an entire order of differences, it is internally coherent, and it does not rely upon anything outside of it. *Langue* has its own identity irrespective of any relationship to other systems. The system of differences that comprises the English language remains the English language regardless of whether or not it differs from French, Spanish, or Tagalog.

Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism is similarly holistic. Parsons theorized society as a single "social system" with its own definite and essential properties, such as "actors" with shared "values," "roles," and "norms." Parsons' "social system" is bigger than either the sum total of the actors or their relations. It has its own functional logics that supersede any given individual or any relations among individuals and which are crucial for any system. Parsons identified four "functional prerequisites": the system's adaptation mechanism, its goal-specification mechanism, its pattern-maintenance mechanism, and its integrative mechanism. These prerequisites maintain social order when they function together; structural-functional analysis often concerns whether a particular event, practice, institution, or other development promotes such functional integration or produces dysfunction. For Parsons, social systems have their own characteristics, identities, and logics. These operate the same way regardless of a social system's relationship with other "systems" around it. Since these other systems are irrelevant, they recede into the analytic background.

In IR theory, holism comes in both materialist and ideational varieties. Perhaps the most famous are structural-realist theories, especially the original version developed by Kenneth Waltz (1979) and the more recent, "offensive," variant offered by John Mearsh eimer (2001). Waltz's structural realism is by far the more sophisticated of the two, as Waltz developed his theory through a close engagement with systems and cybernetic theorists (see Bessner and Guilhot 2015; Goddard and Nexon 2005). In essence, Waltz argues that international systems operate within anarchical orders—that is, they lack a common authority to make and enforce disputes. The absence of a government to enforce contracts, protect property, and provide security precludes the development of a robust division of labor among states. Since states must provide for their own security, they cannot specialize in specific functions. There are no states—or, at least, no great powers—that are "doctor states," or "lawyer states," or "teacher states." For Waltz, this means that we cannot "pick up" existing systems theories and apply them to international politics. The absence of "functional differentiation" among units in the international system means that roles, values, and norms are not a source of structural variation. The only thing that differentiates units is relative capabilities; the only important "role" is that of great power; the only salient form of structural variation is the number of great powers: whether the system is bipolar (two great powers) or multipolar (three or more great powers).

According to Waltz, the structural pressures that incline units toward self-help also incline them to pay attention to changes in relative capabilities—and to respond to

unfavorable shifts in the distribution of power. Over time, then, international systems tend toward the formation of balances of power, which prevent any one state (or coalition of states) from conquering the entire system and, in so doing, replacing anarchy with a central government. Waltz, like other holists, argues that international systems cannot be "reduced" to the properties of their units or their interactions. While he viewed foreign policy—the concrete behavior of specific states—as the result of the interaction between the "shaping and shoving" effects of the international system and the workings of a state's domestic system, he rejected the idea that changes at the domestic level could possibly alter the structure and texture of international politics (see also Waltz 1986, 1996).

Another holist approach, the "world-system" framework developed by Immannual Wallerstein (2004) starts with a "material" structure (in this case, an economic structure of core, semi-periphery, and periphery) and its internal logics (of value appropriation, for instance). His theory analyzes social units and events in terms of their function within—or their opposition to—the operations of the economic world-system (Wallerstein 2004).

While mainstream constructivists like Wendt took issue with structural realism's putative materialism, they ended up embracing his holism, perhaps even more than did Waltz himself (Sending 2002; Goddard and Nexon 2005). Instead of a "material" order, these constructivists focused on a *cultural order*, in which social roles and norms maintain a given equilibrium. For example, Wendt argued that the history of interaction among states could produce three different ideal-typical systems, each rooted in different ideas and norms—a (realist) Hobbesian system, a (neoliberal) Lockean one, or a (strong liberal) Kantean one. But, once formed, these seem to explain their own persistence. At the very least, Wendt's (1994, 2003) arguments for the "inevitability" of a "world state" show significant traces of functionalist reasoning.

Individualism

Individualism represents a different variant of substantialism, one against which relationalism also defines itself. Individualism breaks from—and outright rejects—holism in that it prioritizes self-contained social actors rather than an overarching culture, system, or society. Holism involves *adduction*, a move upward from a part to a presumably self-identical whole. Individualism involves *reduction*, moving downward to a self-identical individual unit.

Individualist scientific ontologies sometimes reject the importance, and even the existence, of social wholes. Jeremy Bentham's claim that "communities" do not actually exist provides a good example: "The Community is a fictitious body, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its members" (quoted in Crossley 2010: 10). Bentham's position is extreme. Most, but not all, individualism

in the social sciences is *methodological*; that is, proponents treat its units as self-contained, purposive individuals regardless of the units in question. Thus, the "individual" need not be a single human being. It could also be a corporate actor, such as a multinational firm or a national-state.

Rational choice theory, with its assumption of *homo economicus*, represents probably the single most common variant of an individualist scientific ontology in sociology and political science. Rational choice theorists express, at their most generous, skepticism about the existence of autonomous systems or structures: any "systems" or structure are merely the sum total of the calculations and actions of individual actors—stable to the extent that those actions produce self-enforcing equilibria. In turn, rational choice approaches presume that the individual has an essential and unchanging core identity: the rational and utility-maximizing person. Moreover, most rational choices require that actors maintain the same preferences as they interact with one another; if interaction can modify or produce preferences, let alone the decision-making logics used by agents, then the approach cannot predict behavior (see MacDonald 2003).

The classic theories of exchange in sociology are similar to these rational choice theorists' methodological individualism (as indeed, in sociology, they prefigure rational choice theory). On the one hand, Homans emphasized exchanges, and hence relations, between actors. He was, in fact, critical of Parsonian structural functionalism for overlooking these exchanges and the actors' engagements. This was an implicit critique of holism. Homans's entire project was, with apologies for the sexist language of the time, to "bring men back in," thereby returning social science to its true task of examining and developing testable propositions "about the behavior of men, not about the behavior of societies" (Homans 1964: 815). On the other hand, this critique of holism did not lead Homans to relationalism. Rather, it led him instead to individualism. The focus ended up being less upon the constitutive character of exchange relations and instead upon the actors' built-in choices and preferences and how those shaped the actors' interactions. It was about how individuals' interests and intentions induced interactions, not the constitutive character of the latter.

Individualist approaches arguably dominate IR theory, particularly those theories which stress the overriding importance of "microfoundations" (Hoppman 1998: 313–314). Individualism is most obvious in rational choice and psychological approaches, which focus quite literally on singular human beings as the foundations of international politics. Andrew Moravcsik (1997: 517), for example, argues that the preferences of individuals and social groups are the causal foundation for behavior and outcomes in the international system. Psychological approaches in the works of Elizabeth Saunders (2009), Rose McDermott (2004; see also McDermott 2001; McDermott, Fowler, and S mirnov 2008; Pauly and McDermott 2023; Horowitz, McDermott, and Stam 2005), Brian Rathbun (2009, 2010) and Joshua Kertzer (2016; see also Kertzer et al. 2014) see individual beliefs and predispositions as driving much of world politics. But

"individualism" need not involve actual individuals—any theory that starts from unified actors is an individualist approach. Neoliberal institutionalists build upon a micro level of self-regarding, rational, utility-maximizing states to explain both their conduct, such as cooperation or conflict, and the sources of collective order (institutions, regimes, and even the persistence of anarchy).

Relations against substances: Rethinking systems, individuals, and interests

We can now better understand some of the key principles of relationalism, for relationalism abjures holism and individualism alike. It rejects "the notion that one can posit discrete units such as the individual or society as ultimate starting points of sociological analysis" (Emirbayer 1997: 287). Instead, the relations that constitute the ostensible essences take priority. Things "are not assumed as independent existences present anterior to any relation, but … again their whole being … first in and with the relations which are predicated of them" (Cassirer 1953: 36; Emirbayer 1997: 287). As Emirbayer (1997: 287) summarizes, "the very terms or units involved in a transaction derive their meaning, significance, and identity from the (changing) functional roles they play within that transaction" (see also Abbott 1996). This implies particular ways of looking at systems, individuals, and interests. It also entails a serious consideration of history and process, a different set of theories and concepts than substantialist theories, as well as particular methodological sensibilities. Below we take each of these in turn.

Relationalism stands apart from both actor-centric and structural-holistic approaches. Rather than seeking to enumerate a list of the attributes of agents and entities, or a holistic catalogue of structures and forces, relational approaches to world politics specify *processes* and *mechanisms* that, among other things, give rise to *both* actors and the environments in which they find themselves (Jackson and Nexon 1999; Emibayer 19 97). To begin with, relationalism implies a different way of looking at what we might normally call "systems" or other big "things" like nation-states. Return, for instance, to Saussure's linguistic structuralism. As noted in the previous section, linguistic structuralism claims that the meaning of a sign only obtains by the differential relations between that sign and other signs. This is a relational claim in fact: the identity, or meaning, of a word cannot be known in itself. Meaning is constituted relationally. However, linguistic structuralism does not stop at this claim. It also claims that this system of differences—i.e. language—is a self-contained thing in its own right, and this is one area where linguistic structuralism's holism departs from relationalism.

Unlike linguistic structuralism, relationalism does not posit that relations of difference adduce to a singular system with an inherent logic, essential characteristics, or unchanging properties (compare Mann 1993). Unlike linguistic structuralism, relationalism would not stake much in a claim that there is an unchanging essential

"system" at all. Relationalism instead would stress only the series of relations, the array of constitutive connections, by which signs obtain their meaning, without any appeal to a bigger unchanging system. It would emphasize the relations of signs among other signs and their complex dance of interactions by which meaning is created.[6] We therefore find stronger relational sensibilities in post-structural linguistic-turn theory, which deploys concepts such as "discursive configurations" to discuss the temporary stabilizations of clusters of meaning (see Weedon 1987; compare Krebs and Lobasz 2007).

Similarly, relationalism takes seriously relations *between* languages or between languages and other entities. For Saussure, languages are not to be understood for their relationship with other languages. The language is considered an entity on its own, fully autonomous from anything external to it. But it is exactly such relations that would be of interest to a relational analysis. Here, relationalism is more in line with Derrida's (2001) post-structuralist analysis of language and meaning. Derrida focuses on how meaning is obtained through infinite deferral and the play of signifiers rather than through the place of a signifier in a "system." Furthermore, Derrida's philosophy of language posits an ontology where there is always something *outside* of language. There a constitutive "outside" to language: everything that is "real" in the world to which language refers. Derrida does not say that this "real" is fully reflected in language; his point is that language tries to fully enclose the meaning of the real world but never can, and in the very process, language obtains its semiotic power. There is always, in the language of political theorist Chantal Mouffe, a "constitutive outside."

These same differences between a holist and a relational approach to language are also evident in differences between holist and relational social theories. Return to Parsonsian structural functionalism. The focus of Parsons' theory of "the social system" was upon a single society treated as a unit in itself. He made few, if any, references to relations with any other societies, or indeed anything outside of the social system. At most, anything external to the social system was the "environment," and Parsons' theory did not treat that environment as important for the dynamics, identity, or logics of the system. Relationalists focus precisely on those things outside of the social system in question. They take seriously, where Parsons' theory did not, other societies, their relations with each other, and how those relations fundamentally shape the boundaries, logics, and very identity of the "social system" in question.

The difference between relationalism and individualism also merits clarification. According to relational thought, we should not think of the individual and society as two ontologically separate entities. Rather, per Dépelteau and Powell (2013: 2), the words "individual" and "society" merely "designate two distinguishable but inseparable aspects of the ongoing flow of interdependent human action" (see also Elias 1989). Similarly, individuals' actions, behaviors, or attributes do not flow from innate qualities but from the relations in which they are inseparably embedded. Anything that appears as an essential trait is in truth, at least in the strongest forms of relational theorizing, merely an effect of relations. Seemingly individual attributes such as

"distinction," argues Bourdieu (1998: 8), or a "certain quality of bearing and manners, most often considered innate … is nothing other than a difference, a gap, a distinctive feature, in short, a *relational* property existing only in and through its relation with other properties."

Given this, relationalists take issue with rational choice theory's assumption that individuals are best analyzed as utility-maximizing agents with stable preferences. Relationalists instead emphasize how individuals' interests are shaped and, perhaps, reshaped through interactions. Consider an example on how students in the United States select which college they will attend. As Abbott (2007) points out, a rational choice—i.e. a substantialist individualist approach—is to treat students as rational actors who choose the college that best matches their preferences. What colleges can do to make sure they get the most applicants, therefore, is to make sure information about the college is widely disseminated. Abbott (2007: 13) explains, "On the basis of these facts and certain preference conditions, the deciding agent makes a rational choice and may or may not choose [University X]." Certain kinds of students will choose the college that best fits them. The problem with this approach is that it overlooks that students may not know exactly what their preferences are before exploring colleges. Often, it is only through the process of researching colleges and the discussion of colleges with families or friends that students come to define what kind of student they are, and hence what college "fits" their preferences in the first place. And rather than reflecting some inner essential characteristics or preferences, the definition of what kind of student they are is dependent upon the process of selection itself.

In short, while substantialism presumes that the identity and interests of a unit (whether they be of systems or individuals) is static and precedes interactions, relationalism sees interactions as producing those identities and interests in the first place. To be clear, relationalists do not necessarily deny that things like systems, nation-states, civilizations, cultures, or individuals with interests *can* exist. It is that relationalists problematize them, rather than take them for granted as starting points for theory and research. That is, while relationalists might agree that patterns of interaction can be fixed, institutionalized, sedimented, or otherwise stabilized over time—and sometimes for long periods—they do not presume that these fixed relations amount to an autonomous "system" composed of essential characteristics that "causes" agents to do things. If a web of connections or series of interactions produces something that looks like or takes on the appearance of a "system" with discrete boundaries, relationalists are interested in those connections and interactions and how they produced the "system" and its boundaries in the first place. Relationalists treat social phenomena that appear to be autonomous, bounded, and fixed with essential characteristics as historical accomplishments, outcomes produced over time, through complex processes and interactions, that itself requires explanation (see Abbott 1996; Tilly 1998; White 1992). Therefore, relationalists take the classic understanding of structures as "relative stabilities in patterns of interaction" and argue that we should *focus on the patterns of*

interaction themselves. They take relative stabilities as an empirical issue rather than baking them into our analytic frameworks.

This processual approach can be seen in Goffman's (1990) approach to individual identities. Unlike rational choice theories, Goffman does not take an individual with presumably stable preferences as a starting point upon which an entire theory can be mounted. Rather, Goffman examines how individuals always find themselves in concrete relational settings and interactions that invite them to "perform" certain identities. The process of interaction with other people means that individuals are constantly doing the "identity work" of performing, gauging responses, and adjusting their performances. The "self" is not a pre-given fixed thing; it is produced, reproduced, and often transformed through the interactions an individual engages in.

How does a relationalist approach reorient IR theory? One example concerns the study of "empire." Empires are typically treated as imperial "systems" or essential "things" bearing unique characteristics reflective of the metropolitan power. For example, conventional studies of "the United States Empire" or "the American Empire" treat it as a unified whole bearing unique "American" characteristics that make it fundamentally different from, say, the "British Empire," or the "Chinese Empire," or the "French Empire." In this substantialist approach, there is an "American style" of doing empire that reflects America's deep liberal values, and other empires have their own cultural characteristics. This means not only that there is a bounded unit with essential attributes but also that the attributes never change. In contrast, a relational approach examines how the boundaries and the very identity of empires are forged through a series of interactions over time, producing less of a static whole than a dynamic imperial formation that shifts in "styles" or strategies depending upon the broader contexts or fields in which the empire operates (Go 2008, 2012).

Go, for example, argues that the US "Empire" has mutated significantly over the course of its history. For much of the nineteenth century, the United States expanded westward as a continental, settler-colonial empire. In the process, it ethnically cleansed the native population and ultimately incorporated, through federation, most of its imperial territory. After the Spanish–American War, it created an overseas colonial empire, which included the Philippines and Puerto Rico. After the Second World War, it reinvented itself yet again, as an "informal empire" (or what IR scholars term a "hegemonic power") supportive of the "new nations" achieving independence from European overseas empires. Go notes that over this period, the US Empire also shifted its self-conception. These shifts did not reflect a deep set of American values or characteristics but rather characteristics of the wider field of interaction. The American Empire did not make and remake the world in its own image but was rather made by and through its very interactions *with* the world (Go 2008, 2012).

Other accounts of empire push this kind of relational analysis even further. Paul Mac Donald (2006), for instance, explains variation in British imperial conquest by looking closely at the patterns of relations that developed among British imperial officials,

militaries, local collaborators, and local rivals. His analysis underscores the degree of variation in imperial systems prior to, during, and in the wake of expansion. Nexon, along with various collaborators, argues that the United States, like the "British Empire" (see Darwin 2009) is better understood as a complex assemblage of different governance arrangements: to varying degrees (among other modes), federal, confederal, and imperial in different times, places, and combinations (see Cooley and Nexon 2013; Nexon and Wright 2007; Musgrave and Nexon 2013; McConaughey, Musgrave, and Nexon 2018). Such an approach rejects the kind of "holism" that looks for a coherent, discrete international system with an overarching structural logic.

Along these lines, consider Samuel Huntington's (infamous) "clash-of-civilizations" thesis. Although we need not think of civilizations in substantialist terms, that is exactly what Huntington does (Jackson 2003, 2006). He maps the global order as divided into a series of distinct civilizations, each defined by their possession of incommensurable values. These kinds of accounts of civilizational politics rest upon the assumption of a unified culture—called a "civilization"—that contains intrinsic, more-or-less-fixed properties. We should not find this essentialist and substantialist underpinning to such arguments surprising, given that Huntington basically treats "civilization" as a euphemism for "race" and imports the same essentialism associated with older approaches that saw the world as organized around racial blocks (Vitalis 2015; Musgrave 2017).

The holism underlying the notion is crucial, however.

First, this perspective sees individuals as belonging to a civilization, although a few may be torn by virtue of biography. Much in the same way that racial thought treats individuals in terms of their race, individuals are then analyzed in terms of that civilization. They are treated as expressive of the civilization's key cultural attributes. The "part"—the individual and their practices—simply reflects the "whole": the civilization. Second, the civilization is a thing in itself: a self-contained unit with its specific static characteristics. Its features exist and continue regardless of the civilization's interactions with other civilizations or peoples.

Contrast this with a relational approach. The thesis depends upon the claim that there are distinct entities called "civilizations" with their own cultural values and intrinsic identity. In Huntington's theory, these civilizations may interact and relate to each other. Indeed, the point is to analyze how they interact through "clashing" with each other. In this sense, the clash-of-civilization thesis goes well beyond Parsonian structural functionalism, which said next to nothing about the interactions between systems. But a relationalist would, nonetheless, lodge two criticisms of Huntington's view of civilizational interaction. First, a relationalist would not reduce civilizational interaction to "clashes." Relationalism would instead examine an array of ways in which different presumed "civilizations" interact (i.e. through exchange or cooperation as well as possible conflict). Second, and most crucially, a relational approach would be hesitant to suggest that there are in fact distinct civilizations with core attributes

outside of their relations with each other. For relationalists, civilizations (or "systems" or "cultures") are not preformed autonomous wholes that then relate to each other—through clashing or not. Instead, those very relations constitute what the civilization is taken to be in the first place. Those relations shape the boundaries of the ostensible civilization and the identity and values of that civilization. "The West" and the "East" are not ontologically separate cultures with their distinct values. Rather, their values—and hence their very essences—have been shaped and reshaped through their relations with each other (Jackson 1999, 2006; Lewis and Wigan 1997; Neumann 1999).

As these examples suggest, a commitment to relationalism is often a matter of degree, with specific research taking different positions on how far to decompose objects of inquiry into their constitutive relations. For example, even though states are themselves composed of relations, some studies treat them as "given" social sites in order to focus on the relations among them, while others find such analytical reification misleading and problematic (see Jackson 2004; McConaughey, Musgrave, and Nexon 2018). We also find scholars who "produce case-specific accounts of how identity claims transform strategic situations" by, for example, mobilizing or demobilizing opposition to the foreign policies of rising power (Jackson and Nexon 2019: 4; Goddard 2008, 2018). Others deploy relational analysis in a more critical or post-structural context, focusing on problematizing the stability of taken-for-granted entities or categories (Bially Mattern 2005; Guillame 2010). Still others engage in experience-near—including ethnographic—study of, for example, diplomats in order to provide an account of the relational contexts that they both operate within and produce (Adler-Nissen and Drieschova 2019; Adler-Nissen 2008; Neumann 2012; Pouliot 2016).

Relational methodologies

Relationalism is "methodologically neutral." There is no single set of methods that are intrinsically relational, but neither are there methods that are intrinsically anti-relational. Even certain quantitative approaches like linear regression, though seemingly substantialist by its assumption of "general linear reality" (Abbott 1988), can be deployed in relational ways, that is by not assuming that the linear model describes reality and only that it captures one set of relations that requires relational interpretation and probably further exploration.

That said, certain methods and techniques are much more amenable to relational ontologies: network analysis, for instance, is a case in point.

Within IR, we find relational accounts that "test hypotheses about patterns of connections between actors—such as those about the effects of similar positions in trade and other networks on conflict" (Jackson and Nexon 2019: 4; see Hafner-Burton et al. 2006; Maoz et al. 2006). Henke (2017), for example, argues that Washington is better able to recruit states into multilateral military coalitions based on the number of

independent relationships—such as joint memberships in international organizations—that exist between the two. Besides network analysis, there are other relational-friendly methods such as multidimensional scaling, correspondence analysis, or cluster analysis. These are graphic representations of relations, and they are particularly useful for a relational ontology. Bourdieu (1984) famously employs such techniques to make claims about the relational construction of class identities and consumption patterns in class fields.

There are also methods that are less amenable to relational analysis. Multivariate linear regression, mentioned above, is one example—particularly in some formulations. Perhaps *the* dominant approach in conflict studies is the use of "directed dyads," in which the unit of analysis is a country—usually for each year of the data set—and the dependent variable is whether it initiates an action, say a "war" or lower-level militarized dispute—against another country. So our data set might look at whether, say, the United States initiated a war against every other country in the world in 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, and so on. We would also have an observation for each of those countries and whether they initiated a war against the United States. This is self-evidently a substantialist approach. The United States is a fixed entity; it cannot change in its "essential" attributes via its interactions with other states. Only its "variable" attributes, such as its per capita gross domestic product (GDP), are allowed to alter over the course of the analysis. Even more important is that the basic assumption of analysis is that each observation is independent. This is, to put it mildly, nonsense. Governments do not enter into wars independent of the patterns of relations among a wide variety of states; during the Cold War, a vast number of countries were client states of the United States or the Soviet Union; some required affirmative support to initiate a serious conflict, and that support (or prohibition) from their superpower patron was itself not independent of the overall relational contexts in which it operated (Cranmer and Desmarais 2016; for similar arguments in the context of international political economy, see e.g. Oatley et al. 2013; Winecoff 2015, 2020).

Another substantialist approach is found in standard forms of cross-national comparison. This form of "methodological nationalism" requires the analyst to suspend or overlook relations *between* nation-states to isolate features or characteristics *within* nation-states (Chernilo 2006). Most other forms of comparison are also difficult to articulate with relational ontologies, for most comparisons—whether cross-national or across regions or whatever—necessitate abstracting units from their constitutive relations in order to list their attributes and compare them (Go 2014). Comparison is not intrinsically opposed to relational analysis: analysts could compare assemblages or networks in different historical time periods, for instance. But as a rule, relationalists who use comparison have to tread carefully.

Regardless of the particular methodology or method, history and process are crucial to relationalism. Structuralism was famously static. In order to analyze the "system," the analyst had to "freeze" it in time. This was Saussure's key analytic move: to bracket

diachronic analysis (i.e. how words change meaning over time) and instead look at language synchronically (i.e. examine the linguistic system in one moment). By contrast, relationalism insists on understanding the world in terms of *processes* of interaction. Perhaps a better way to think about relational methods rather than pinning relationalism to a particular technique is to treat relational methods as a sensibility: a "methodological relationalism" (Go and Lawson 2017: 26). This means refusing to treat things as things. It means taking the boundaries, identities, and interests of social objects, actors, or systems as things to be explained rather than to be assumed, while in turn, taking process and interactions more seriously than we otherwise would. Of course, this methodological relationalism does, at times, require assuming some amount of fixity to entities. But it also requires ensuring that even when we make those assumptions, we treat them as analytic rather than ontological assumptions.

Relationalism in IPS

The emphasis on relations rather than systems or individuals can be seen across many existing social theories, schools of thought, and research programs. Specific theories need not be consistently relational or substantialist. As discussed in previous sections, Saussure's linguistic structuralism has a strong dose of relationalism by emphasizing relations of difference *within* a linguistic system, but it ends up more substantialist when theorizing the system itself. Social theories might be similarly ambivalent. Marxist thought contains strong substantialist elements for its theorization of an overarching capitalist system, but Marx's concept of capital can be said to be relational. "Capital is not a thing," he pronounces in Volume III of *Capital*, "but rather a definite social production relation, belonging to a definite historical formation of society, which is manifested in a thing and lends this thing a specific social character" (Marx 2000: 530).

These ambiguities within certain social theories aside, it is the case that relational thought is manifest in particular concepts that are meant to shed themselves of systems-theoretic or substantialist baggage when they want to talk about bounded or discrete social contexts. In this way, concepts such as social *fields*, *networks*, *assemblages*, *and repertoires*—which contributors take up in the following section of the Handbook—parallel discursive configurations as ways of holding onto the fundamentally dynamic character of contexts produced by dynamic processes of interaction. For example, Somers (1994: 72) speaks of "relational settings" rather than systems; she describes a relational setting as

a patterned matrix of institutional relationships among cultural, economic, social, and political practices. It invokes spatial and geometric network metaphors rather than systemic ones. The most significant aspect of a relational setting is that there is no governing entity according to which the whole setting can be categorized; it can only be characterized by deciphering its spatial and network patterns and temporal processes. As such, it is a relational matrix, similar to a social network.

Social scientists or theorists who are more explicitly relational sometimes do propose fully formed alternative theories. While the concept "field" can be used in different ways, Bourdieu develops it as a part of a larger theory of the social world which is self-consciously relational. In Bourdieu's (1991a) conceptualization, a "field" is a social space of relations defined by struggle over "capitals." It is an arena of struggle in which actors compete for a variety of valued resources, that is various species of "capital" that are potentially convertible to each other. The concept "field" thus refers to the configuration of actors (the multidimensional "field of forces") and the classificatory schemes and rules of the game, which actors use as they strategize and struggle for position (i.e. the "rules of the game") (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 97). A field is a "network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 97). Field theory thus offers a relational rather than substantialist view of the social. "To think in terms of fields," explain Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 96), "is to think relationally" (for applications, see Adler-Nissen 2008; Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014; Bigo 1994; Go 2008; Mérand 2010; McCourt 2021; Pouponneau and Mérand 2017; Musgrave and Nexon 2018; Nexon and Neumann 2018; Pouliot 2010).

Foucault's (1979, 1983) theory of power can also be seen as a relational theory explicitly meant to overcome substantialist theories of power. In substantialist theories, power is something possessed and owned by an actor, and the ownership of such things is what makes one "powerful." Foucault argues that we must think of power in an entirely different way. Power is not a substance, he avers. It is "a mode of action upon the action of others" (1983: 221). Rather than a thing to be possessed, withheld, or doled out, it is a *relation*. At the same time, Foucault insinuates relational thinking when he speaks of individuals. Power works upon individuals not as a form of repression but as a *productive relation*. The "individual" is an *effect* of relations (1983). This is relationalism expressed as critical theory, even though Foucault never proclaims the identity of a relational social theorist.

Major variants of relationalism in IR

The chapters that follow detail different strands of relationalism in contemporary anglophone IR scholarship. Alexander Montgomery's contribution looks at the promises and pitfalls of social-network analysis, which is itself a major site of relational work across the social sciences. Marylou Hamm, Frédéric Mérand, and Anke Obendiak

detail the value-added of fields; much, but not all, of this research draws heavily on Bourdieu, who identified himself as a relational social theorist (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 179). Paul MacDonald outlines Tilly's "relational-realist approach," with a particular emphasis on repertoires. And Colleen Bell and Caroline Holmqvist provide an overview of assemblage theory and how this form of relational analysis reorients the study of war.

Social-Network Approaches

Social-network theory "takes as its fundamental unit of analysis the relationship between actors" (Erikson 2013: 221). It "addresses the association among nodes rather than the attributes of particular nodes" and is "grounded in three principles: nodes and their behaviours are mutually dependent, not autonomous; ties between nodes can be channels of transmission of both material … and non-material products; and persistent patterns of association create structures that define, enable, or restrict the behaviour of nodes" (Hafner-Burton, Emilie, and Montgomery 2009: 562). The fundamental unit of analysis in social-network theory is the social tie: a connection between two or more social sites. These connections may take many different forms, including affective relationships, material transactions, legal contracts, or joint affiliation with an association (Wasserman and Faust 1994: 18–19). They may be durable or fleeting, strong or weak, symmetric or asymmetric, or friendly or hostile (Hafner-Burton et al. 2009: 563). The character and arrangement of these ties produces networks, and maps of networks are critical to a social-network explanation of outcomes (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Wellman 1983).

Erikson (2013) divides network-influenced scholarship between relationalists and formalists. Their disagreement hinges on the value of abstracting from the meanings embedded in, and the dynamic character of, social transactions. Most quantitative network analysis adopts a formalist approach. But other scholars, as Erikson (2013: 228) writes, "object to the duality of tie and content, which is consistent with Simmelian formalism that understands forms as a priori and content as a posteriori." "Formalists" generalize about the abstract properties of networks and only bring meaning—content—back in to explain variation or as an outcome, such as in the study of norm diffusion. Erickson's (2013: 228) "relationalists," on the other hand, "focus on the act of interaction, in which meaning is not separate from but instead creates—or instantiates—relationships." Indeed, as she notes, many prominent sociological relationalists—Emirbayer, Sommers, and Mische—draw heavily from pragmatist theory. Some turn to Bourdieu and practice-theoretic ideas, whether pragmatist or otherwise.

These disputes should not obscure the importance of social-network scholarship as a vector of relational IR theory. All work in this idiom moves away from explanations focused on the internal dispositions of actors or the interaction of their categorical

attributes (see Emirbayer 1997). Scholars look at patterns of relations to understand dynamics of global political economy (Oatley et al. 2013), how networks created by membership in international organizations shape interstate conflict (Hafner-Burton et al. 2006), the topography of international status (Duque 2018), or variation in the nature and strategies of revisionist states (Goddard 2018). From a network perspective, Cranmer and Desmarais (2016) criticize the use of directed dyads in conflict studies for making unsustainable wagers about the independence of units. The leadership of states do not make decisions to go to war or to join alliances in isolation from the overall pattern of their relations with other states.

Fields

Neumann's (2002: 628) key statement of the need for a "practice turn" argued that the "analysis of discourse understood as the study of the preconditions for social action must include the analysis of practice understood as the study of social action itself." We should look at how meanings are enacted through social practices in ways that configure and reconfigure social life, power relations, and conditions of possibility for action. Post-structural theory generally understands the stabilization and transformation of social life in terms of configurations of linguistic signs and signifiers. However, Neumann's intervention amounted to a call for more emphasis on processes and on the kinds of transactional analysis that lies at the heart of relational theory.

Other scholars soon roped such arguments into the broader development of practice-theoretic approaches to the study of IR (Adler-Nissen 2008; Adler and Pouliot 2011; Pouliot 2008, 2010). Of course, deployments of practice theory—especially in its Bourdieu-inflected variants—predate these developments (Bigo 2011), but most variants of practice theory overlap with, or constitute a subset of, relational social theories. Practices are obviously processes; they are the doings of agents. But when we treat them as our primary unit of analysis, we study them as analytically independent of actors—as operating "between" two or more social sites and as only sensible in the relations among those social sites. Thus, they become the "stuff" that constitutes both agents and structures (Bigo 2012: 236–283).

Practice theory extends well beyond Bourdieu (Bueger and Gadinger 2015), but his framework provides a useful—and highly influential—alternative to social-network analysis for building relational theory (see Adler-Nissen 2012). The focus of the chapter by Hamm, Mérand, and Obendiak is on fields. Fields comprise specific spheres of social action; they are the "constructed mesolevel social order[s] in which actors … are attuned to and interact with one another on the basis of shared … understandings about the purpose of the field, relationships to others in the field …, and the rules governing legitimate action in the field (Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 9). They involve "rules of the game" that shape how actors relate to one another as they jockey for power, status, and influence. Bourdieu (1991b: 230) describes fields in terms of "a set

of objective power relations imposed on all those who enter the field, relations which are not reducible to the intentions of individual agents or even to direct interactions between agents." Position in the hierarchy of a field depends on the accumulation of field-relevant capital: assets and performances valued within a field (Berling 2012: 45). Fields play a similar role in Bourdieusian practice theory as network structures in relationalist analysis, discursive configurations in post-structuralist theory, and Elias's figurations (Elias 1978). They parallel structural analysis—the workings of relation and position—while focusing on processes and ongoing dynamics of agent–structure co-constitution (Bigo 2012; Pouliot 2016; Leander 2012).

Repertoires and "relational realism"

Charles Tilly's (e.g. 2003) notion of "relational realism" begins with network analysis. Much of Tilly's analytic infrastructure—including his use of ties, networks, and brokerage—is firmly lodged in social-network analysis. While he was skeptical of many wagers of cultural sociology, his work increasingly supplemented the formalist concepts of social-network analysis with attention to identity, stories, and meanings. As he linked up key conceptual innovations—most notably, "contentious repertoires"—to his overall program, he offered a distinctive relational intervention in these debates. This intervention sought to hook up social-network scholarship's "specific conceptual and methodological apparatus to much broader theoretical and empirical issues in the study of social change" (Diani 2007: 323).

Tilly's core claim was that repertoires both "facilitate and channel" contentious politics—they mobilize collective action *and* order it on to predictable paths. Repertoires are a collection of scripts, a set of routinized ideas about how to make political claims. Jazz musicians learn a set of standards that they are expected to play. Shakespearean actors master a common set of plays. Many scholars of contentious politics argue that actors also learn routines through which to press their claims. A classic example of a contentious repertoire is the public meeting: a performance used to organize social movements in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain in which an assembly would be advertised, a chairman elected, speakers presented, resolutions crafted, votes taken, and petitions circulated (Tilly 1993: 259).

We can similarly approach relations among states as facilitated and channeled through repertoires. To take one example, states enjoy, in theory, infinite ways in which to practice power politics: they may, for example, mobilize their military forces, conquer their neighbors, muster alliances, impose sanctions, "name and shame," or petition international bodies. But at any particular time, states consistently turn to a limited set of repertoires. Prior to the Cold War, joint military exercises were a relatively rare event; during the Cold War, they became an essential repertoire for reassuring allies and bolstering the credibility of extended deterrence. Repertoires of multilateral intervention have likewise evolved from peacekeeping models, which focus

on monitoring and enforcing ceasefires, to peace-enforcement models, which include imposing settlements and disarming potential spoilers (see Goddard, MacDonald, and Nexon 2019).

Repertoires are inherently relational: they emerge and are embedded within "the existing web of social relations and understandings among parties to the interaction" (Tilly 2015: 44). These relations shape the set of repertoires available and also who has the authority to deploy them. Moreover repertoires, like performances, evolve and innovate as the actors interact with the audience. As Tilly argues, the "theatrical metaphor calls attention to the clustered, learned, yet improvisational character of people's interactions as they make and receive each other's claims" (2008: 14). Modern social movements updated the public meeting to include more dramatic forms of mass political mobilization, including nationwide strikes, demonstrations, public marches, online petitions, and flash mobs (Gerges 2016).

Tilly's relational realist influence in IR theory is, interestingly, deeply relational (see Mische 2011). In the mid-1990s, Tilly relocated from the New School for Social Research to Columbia University. He brought with him his storied workshop on contentious politics. This helped link together a variety of scholars and graduate students in the New York area, including Ann Mische, Harrison White, and Mustafa Emirbayer. Columbia was also a hub of more socially theoretically inflected network sociology (see Mische 2011). It is perhaps not surprising that much of the influence of relational realism appears among his students. Not all of them specifically use the language of repertoires, but all focus on how rhetorical deployments and performances draw from, and then reconfigure, relations. For example, Jackson (2006) treats discursive configurations as networks of rhetorical commonplaces. He argues that political debates about their relationship shape political outcomes. Goddard (2008) looks at how rising powers deploy rhetorical repertoires to mobilize and demobilize resistance and activate and deactivate political ties in the context of the social construction of indivisible conflicts. Krebs and Jackson (2007) build an account of rhetorical coercion focused entirely on public meanings and variation in the organization of discursive environments.

Assemblages

Finally, there are relationalists that focus on the social world as a series of assemblages. As Deleuze and Guattari defined the term, "An assemblage [is] every constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow—selected, organized, stratified—in such a way as to converge … artificially and naturally; an assemblage, in this sense, is a veritable invention" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 406; their emphasis). More conventional IR approaches are likely to find the concept of assemblages frustrating. If most scholars look to concepts that simplify and clarify the world around them, the concept of assemblages is specifically designed to induce complexity. To

approach the world as assemblages is to see a "a patchwork of heterogenous and fluid configurations that, in turn, form part of other configurations… assemblage thinking requires that we accept that the social has indeterminate properties that are unstable and indefinite" (Bell and Holmqvist, this volume). The notion of "assemblages" provides a way of tapping into the dynamic, processual, and contingent production of larger wholes out of smaller-scale configurations (see Bousquet and Curtis 2011).

As Bell and Holmqvist note in their contribution, there is a great deal of variation in how scholars deploy the concept of assemblage. Some treat assemblage as an ontological position, a statement about the relational nature of what we treat as coherent objects. Saskia Sassen (2006), for example, contends that contemporary globalization is best understood as shifts in the assemblages that compose global and national structures, in particular the partial disassembling of national-states and the creation of new "global assemblages." For others, assemblage is used as a concept that allows theorists to think through the historical and contingent nature of objects. Abrahamsen and Williams, for example, use "assemblage ideas" to trace configurations of war and security (Abrahamsen and Williams 2009). There is "a kind of enduring slipperiness of assemblages that allows for the concept to be inserted with relational thought in creative ways" (Bell and Holmqvist, this volume).

Assemblage thinking is variegated, but scholars share certain commitments. The first is a commitment to relationalism. Unlike some approaches to networks and fields, assemblages foreground the intensely fluid nature of relations, the ways in which what we approach as essential "objects" are contingent formations, whether "units" such as the state, the nation, and the city, or "structures" such as capitalism. All of these social formations consist of "complex assemblages of different elements" that are made and remade over time (Abrahamsen 2017: 254). Scholars also deploy assemblages to break down the material–ideational divide in ways that go far beyond saying that both "matter" to rejecting the "twin pitfalls of technological determinism and social constructivism" (Bousquet 2014: 93). Drawing from Bousquet, Bell and Holmqvist argue that assemblages provide a correction for IR scholarship that treats "technology as 'either an exogenous causal variable, or the mere materialization or extension of state instrumentality, economic rationality and normative regimes'; a binary reasoning that hampers proper appreciation of the relationship between technology and society in general, and technology and war in particular" (Bousquet 2014: 93).

Conclusion

The contributions to this section of the handbook are not an exhaustive review of relationalism. Elements of relational analysis also show up in discourse analysis, especially when it is concerned with how configurations of meaning produce conditions of possibility for agency and action (Bially Mattern 2005).

Relationalism also appears frequently in "postcolonial theory" and "decolonial theory." This work problematizes approaches that take things like "race," "cultures," or "civilizations" as fixed identities reflecting deeper substances. Actor-network theory, which has established in place in contemporary international-relations theory, also falls within the broad camp of relational work (McCourt 2016, 2022; Nexon and Pouliot 2013).

Another way of cashing out relationalist sensibilities involves concentrating on the nature of agency. For example, the "pragmatist turn" in international studies (Cochran 2002; Friedrichs and Kratochwil 2009) rejects frameworks that associate human agency with "constrained" decision-making, such rational-choice theories, and some versions of sociological institutionalism (see Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Sending 2002). In those approaches, human behavior is entirely predictable if we know, say, their preferences and available information. Instead, many pragmatists view human beings as creative actors who are embedded in an 'organized or arranged social context (see e.g. Avant 2016; Pratt 2016; Widmaier 2004).

Relationalism has already gained significant traction in the field of IPS and within IR more generally. It has the potential to shift both the types of questions scholars ask and the methods that they deploy. As we hope this chapter makes clear, questions such as "Would Russia have invaded Ukraine in the absence of NATO expansion?" are deeply problematic; a world without the *process* of NATO expansion is one in which identities, boundaries, and structures likely look very little like the ones we face today. Understanding how such relations are configured and reconfigured? That is a key task for IPS.

Notes

1. "Social site" is one generic term (another is "node") for locations—such as persons, organizations, and places—constituted by relations. Charles Tilly (2002: 11) defines a social site as a "locus of coordinated social action" and argues that from "the perspective of any particular social site, an identity is an experience of transaction with another social site."
2. As we note below, there are clear connections here to a wide variety of classic social theorists, including Karl Marx's emphasis on economic processes and Emile Durkheim's conceptualization of "social facts."
3. It is arguably closer to what Thomas S. Kuhn called a "paradigm" than realism, liberalism, or constructivism. But that doesn't mean calling relationalism a "paradigm" is particularly enlightening. For a discussion, see Jackson and Nexon (2013).
4. Including the embrace of "critical realism" as a philosophy of social science.
5. Parts of the next few pages draw heavily upon Jackson and Nexon (2019), others from Goddard and Nexon (2016).
6. Again, linguistic structuralism did highlight these relations. But it relegated them to secondarily important to the "system," to which those relations supposedly added up.

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CHAPTER 3

RELATIONALLY CHALLENGED

Putting the Social Back into Network Analysis

ALEXANDER H. MONTGOMERY

INTRODUCTION

Social network analysis (SNA) has recently been re-imported into the study of International Relations as well as the study of politics more generally (Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery 2009; Victor, Montgomery, and Lubell 2017a; Lazer 2011). SNA is a well-established set of social theories coupled to quantitative and qualitative tools developed primarily in sociology over the past 50 years to map and analyze the structural characteristics of networks. It is a part of the broader network analysis family of approaches, parts of which do not involve social theory or mechanisms. Early SNA work and some contemporary work in International Relations (IR) and related fields demonstrate the approach's power and potential to contribute to International Political Sociology (IPS), primarily via deeply relationalist theories and methodologies as well as through treating intersubjectivity and history seriously. Qualitative and small-n approaches in particular have demonstrated how network approaches reflect these sensibilities, even contributing back to the broader SNA literature through novel theoretical contributions derived from their analyses. Such approaches—by virtue of not relying on large-n network data—tend to center relations, social theory, and history. By contrast, while some quantitative SNA approaches have helped to inject relational as well as intersubjective and historical elements into IR in general and statistical studies of IR in particular, in many cases the use of such methodologies has been individualistic, asocial, ahistoric, or all three.

The power of quantitative SNA to contribute to IPS breaks down when scholars treat networks as individually possessed, static, and concrete substances rather than social, dynamic, and historically contingent relations; when new measures are created without reference to theories or tools; and when network characteristics are reduced to single-variable systemic, simple dyadic, or even monadic analyses compatible with methodological individualism. Tools are being applied in a particularly widespread breakout of "instrumentitis" that is most prevalent among a group of current and former physicists, leading to shallow analyses that disregard the social nature of the data or ignore highly problematic nonrandomly missing observations.

Yet, some studies are beginning to carefully and slowly adopt the full analytic structure of SNA, including engaging with underlying social theories and their relational underpinnings. Moreover, quantitative methodologies have now (mostly) caught up with theory and are able to simultaneously account for multiple network mechanisms and the historical evolution of networks over time. While this new trend toward adoption of SNA as a whole rather than piecemeal is largely in line with IPS, certain tensions and incompatibilities still exist.

When political science scholarship refers to networks, it typically envisions them as unitary actors, a form of organization that differs significantly from hierarchies and markets (Powell 1990). The post-9/11 popularity of treating networks as an organizational form has spawned tautologies ("it takes a network to defeat a network": McChrystal 2011: 69) as well as a whole cottage industry of books that claim to use network analysis but treat "networks" as black boxes with binary (e.g. "flat" versus "hierarchical") characteristics whose sole effect is to bestow influence upon individuals (e.g. Szwarcberg 2015; Patel 2022).[1] By contrast, SNA treats networks as complex social structures defined by a set or sets of ties (such as friendship, enmity, common membership, or transactions) that connect nodes (e.g. individuals, groups, corporations, or states). As such, network analysis can be usefully applied not only to agents that are traditionally referred to as networks (e.g. transnational advocacy networks, clandestine transnational actors, and networked governance) but also to any kind of social structure involving relational ties. Indeed, rather than assuming or asserting that organizations have particular structures, SNA can be used to assess and classify complex admixtures of hierarchical, network, and market relations, since no organization is purely only one of these forms. For example, hierarchical organizations inherently rely on informal networks to function (Krackhardt and Hanson 1993), and networks of human rights international nongovernmental organizations are much more centralized than typically assumed (Murdie 2014).

SNA, or at least its tools, can be applied to phenomena that are not strictly social as well; however, many of the theories and mechanisms are grounded in social theory and may (and often do) suffer when removed from a social context. Standard primers to SNA (e.g. Scott 2017) and a comprehensive, if aging, methodological text (Wasserman and Faust 1994) are widely used in both pedagogy and research; the latest trends in methods are periodically released as updates (Carrington, Scott, and Wasserman 2005; Knoke and Yang 2008; Scott and Carrington 2014).

SNA approaches are not exclusively large-n quantitative—important texts concentrate on mapping small but empirically important networks (e.g. Krebs 2002; Spindel 2018; Perliger and Pedahzur 2011; Montgomery 2005), leverage particular social network concepts to illustrate how certain groups gain or maintain power (e.g. Padgett and Ansell 1993; Padgett 2016; Goddard 2009, 2018; MacDonald 2014, 2018; Nexon and Wright 2007; Obert and Padgett 2012), or elucidate the relationship between networks and repertoires of resistance and violence (e.g. Staniland 2012, 2014; Wood 2008; Gad

e 2020; Mazur 2021; Parkinson 2013, 2016, 2023; Hundman and Parkinson 2019; Hundman 2016; Hadden 2015; Metternich et al. 2013). Some large-n work in this vein has managed to center relations, social theory, and history (e.g. Dorff 2017; Mazur 2019). These pieces, in turn, have contributed back to social theory and network analysis more broadly. However, quantitative SNA in IR is my main focus here since the pathologies associated with importing SNA are most prevalent and damaging in quantitative approaches, which are employed in the vast majority of network research in IR.

Below, I first recount a brief history of the use of quantitative SNA in IR. I then discuss how network analysis relates to relationalism in the abstract, followed by examples of contemporary work that diverges from relational sensibilities both inside and outside IR. I end by reviewing recent promising developments in methodology and outline guidance for future work.

History: The SNA (re)turn in IR?

SNA itself has a lengthy and often-forgotten tradition in IR, a particularly apt irony given its potential to take history seriously. Early pioneers worked on examining the emergent structure of the international system between states resulting from ties derived from trade, international governmental organization (IGO) membership, diplomatic exchanges, and diplomatic visits (Savage and Deutsch 1960; Brams 1966, 1969; Skjelsbaek 1972; Christopherson 1976). Brams' (1966) piece is particularly remarkable, since it investigated three types of data that are still some of the primary sources for international SNA today: trade, IGO membership, and diplomatic exchanges. Moreover, it uses some of the same general approaches commonly used today, including rudimentary community detection. The membership of these groups in this early analysis indicated the strength of geography and colonization in determining the structure of international exchanges. Nevertheless, these early pieces mostly observed the structure of the networks rather than using network analysis to test structural theories or predict outcomes of interest.

The next wave of researchers in this particular branch of SNA focused their tools on testing theories of dependency, imperialism, development inequality, and world-systems theory. Some used blockmodeling (simplifying complicated networks into exclusive "blocks," groups of states who have stronger ties to each other than to states in other blocks) to determine the socio-economic structure of the international system, first dividing the world into groups that shared ties to each other (or to other blocks), then measuring the inequalities across or within such block (Snyder and Kick 1979; Breiger 1981; Nemeth and Smith 1985; Faber 1987; Peacock, Hoover, and Killian 1988; Smith and White 1992; Van Rossem 1996); this research continues today, primarily in sociology (Kick and Davis 2001; Beckfield 2003; Mahutga 2006; Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2009), although there has been a resurgence of interest due to the

development of advanced community detection (Lupu and Traag 2013; Greenhill and Lupu 2017; Kim 2013; Gomez and Parigi 2015; Haim 2016). Others have used the world city system, rather than states, as their object of analysis (Smith and Timberlake 2001; Alderson and Beckfield 2004; Choi, Barnett, and Chon 2006; Lee 2013), while still others concentrated on the determinants of international trade from network characteristics such as structural autonomy or embeddedness in the IGO network (Sacks, Ventresca, and Uzzi 2001; Ingram, Robinson, and Busch 2005). The main methodological text for SNA even included a trade network as one of the five sample networks (Wasserman and Faust 1994). Yet, much of this research was published in sociological or multidisciplinary journals rather than political science or IR ones. Indeed, citation maps of political networks reveal a divided field, with American politics, public policy, and IR bridged by sociological works (Victor, Montgomery, and Lubell 2017b). This points to a possible cause of the lack of recognition of this work in mainstream political science, despite its quantitative cachet: the accompanying social theories either never gained much of a foothold or subsequently receded in popularity in political science and IR. Moreover, a longstanding preference for linear and mechanical causation combined with a contemporary infatuation with causal identification in political science is at odds with most network approaches. Networks are an ideal way to engage with complexity and systems, both of which are anathema to linear models; network analysts are comfortable with a wide set of approaches to causality (Fowler et al. 2011; Rogowski and Sinclair 2017) that do not fit well with many political scientists' notions of reality as a set of simplistic interactions (AKA "general linear reality": see Abbott 1988).

Ironically, some of this early work fits much more closely with the relationalist project than most of the contemporary literature. In part, this is due to the nature of relationalism: while some aspects of the project are new to IR (in particular, treating relations as prior to entities), intellectually it has a great deal in common with work in the 1960s and 1970s by scholars such as Karl Deutsch, who emphasized social structures such as security communities rather than individual motives in IR. It is no accident that Deutsch is one of the few political scientists highlighted in Linton Freeman's history of the development of SNA (Deutsch 1957; Freeman 2004). Moreover, the proper use of these tools can help to break down rigid assumptions regarding pre-existing structures; for example, while world-systems theory is holist in its assumptions about core–periphery structures, SNA can bring a relationalist sensibility by testing whether these assumptions are correct, potentially uncovering more complex social structures between a larger number of groups.

Theory: Overlaps and disjunctures between network analysis and relationalism

As the "relational turn" in IR groups together a number of different approaches that share certain sensibilities but differ on methodological approaches, the compatibility between network analysis and relationalism depends upon how narrowly or broadly relationalism itself is defined. Here, I adopt the guideline that "Relationalist modes of inquiry hold that relations should be treated, either analytically or ontologically, as prior to either individual agents or aggregate structures" (Nexon 2010: 100). While SNA is a mode of inquiry that can potentially treat relations as analytically prior to individual agents, incompatibilities arise when attempting to move from methodology to ontology in the quantitative context.

This is partially a difference between theory and practice. In theory, there is no need to make methodological or ontological assumptions about the existence of individual nodes at a particular level of analysis. Nodes could be determined from a network analysis of relations at a lower or higher level, from observations of interactions at a set of sites or events, or with bootstrapping by following connections from a small number of carefully chosen root nodes. For example, it may be unnecessary to assume the existence of states in the international system in order to conduct an analysis of links between such states, since the existence of states as nodes can be discovered from analysis of flows at a lower level of material objects or people between and within states. Using the "First Encounter between alien peoples" counterfactual (Wendt 1999: 108), simply by observing the motion of individuals and things, it would be possible to come up with a list of geographically discrete entities where more movement occurs within than across those entities, which would probably correspond fairly well to many, but not all, states. Consequently, it would be possible to infer the existence of many nodes without assuming them in the first place.

To take the counterfactual a bit further, such an analysis would also diverge in important ways from the traditional list of states in, for example, the correlates of war (COW) data set (Correlates of War Project 2011). Micro-states that are highly dependent upon their neighbors would likely be combined into regional units; European Union countries would be more difficult to discern than, for example, Latin American countries. The COW state membership data set itself is actually defined in terms of relational data: prior to 1920, existence is defined in part by recognition from Britain and France, using the "assume-root-nodes" method, and from 1920, it is defined in part by membership in the League of Nations or the United Nations, using the "use-nodes-at-a-higher-level-of-analysis" method.[2] Yet, the problem with any of these approaches is that some kinds of individual nodes have to be assumed in order to carry out this bootstrapping exercise from either a lower or higher level. While this is not a unique problem of network analysis vis-à-vis relationalism (almost all relational analyses need to assume some kind of objects that relations happen between for methodological purposes), the necessity of treating some nodes as ontologically primitive for the purposes of quantification highlights the problem in this particular context. A "polycentric" approach can potentially counter this by observing interactions at sites or

events while including all nodes at multiple levels of analysis. Observations at a typical United Nations General Assembly would certainly reproduce the international state system, whereas the 2015 Paris United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties would produce not only states but also a variety of nonstate actors as nodes. At the very least, this kind of approach can decenter states and allow the most "important" actors to emerge from the events rather than from ontological assumptions (see e.g. Paterson et al. 2013).

SNA is also problematic at the methodological level for relational approaches, although this is purely because of practice rather than theory. Analytically, SNA allows for, but does not restrict practitioners to, the treatment of relations as the objects of inquiry. However, users in IR often quickly move from calculation of a relational property of nodes, such as centrality, to treating these measurements ontologically as monadic attributes of the nodes. This is closely related to the tendency of methodological individualism to decay into ontological individualism, moving from "for the purposes of my analysis, I will treat states as unitary actors" to "states are unitary actors." Consequently, in fields like IR that have been dominated by such approaches, the implementation of SNA has often resulted in network concepts being applied to traditional levels of analysis such as individual states or the system as a whole rather than remaining analytically relational. Moreover, social network theories are often discarded along the way in favor of pre-existing IR theories, many of which are individualist and therefore are potentially a poor fit for the methodologies.

Assumptions, assumptions

In recent years, SNA has been (re)discovered by mainstream political scientists (Victor, Montgomery, and Lubell 2017b; Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery 2009; Lazer 2011). At the same time, the measures used have become more decoupled from network theory as well as relationalism. Instead of treating SNA as an integrated methodology with dense connections between theories and tools, it is being used as a set of stand-alone tools. While the use of blockmodeling to determine inequality and core–periphery structures was a natural union between method and theory, an overlap that arose "from the interest of each approach in identifying nations' positions on the basis of their overall location in multiple world networks" (Breiger 1981: 375), new efforts are frequently an attempt to marry old IR concepts to network methods rather than to adapt existing theories that relate network structures to outcomes of interest. This amounts to a shotgun wedding: while there is a great deal of interest in the couple and their forthcoming offspring, the depth and longevity of the relationship, as well as the amount of care that will be provided for their children, is somewhat in doubt. Uses in IR have often involved imputing networks from similarities between actors rather than measurement of actual ties (thereby assuming that shared monadic attributes constitute relations), creating new measures without a theoretical basis, and concentrating on

monads, dyads, or systemic characteristics conducive to individualist or holist approaches rather than relationalist ones.

Ideally, scholars would analyze direct networks (such as trade and diplomatic relations) in which the data represents relational ties or affiliation networks such as mutual membership in IGOs or alliances. Instead, some scholars have been imputing networks from shared characteristics or attributes such as common democracy, ethnic groups, or religion (e.g. Maoz 2001; Maoz et al. 2005; Lewer and Van den Berg 2007). This assumes that nodes with those particular attributes form ties without considering complicating interactions with other attributes (shared or not) or demonstrating that sharing those attributes would lead to ties. While homophily (the tendency of units with similar characteristics to form ties) is considered to be an important mechanism in creating ties, assuming ties from homophily without demonstrating that the mechanism is operating involves heroic assumptions. Sharing one particular identity does not imply that individuals will automatically act toward each other in a positive way (indeed, they may act negatively); due to the multiple, overlapping, and contingent identities that are possible for any two actors, arguments about homophily and ties must be carefully contextualized. Indeed, heterophily can also be an important mechanism for creating ties: for example, due to comparative advantage, countries trade unlike things rather than like things.

Moreover, for the particular processes that many IR scholars are interested in (such as conflict), it is networks that are generated as the result of interactions, not networks generated from individual attributes, that seem to be important (Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2006). For example, the democratic peace appears to be a network phenomenon rather than a dyadic one (Campbell, Cranmer, and Desmarais, 2018). The distinction is important: dyadic approaches treat each dyadic observation as independent of all other dyads, whereas network approaches explicitly seek to measure the multiple different processes through which the observation of one dyad is dependent on the simultaneous observation (or non-observation) of others. Modifying Emmanuel Adler's phrase (1997: 347), the 'democratic peace' cries for a social network explanation. Current attempts tend to treat common democracy as a binary dyadic attribute rather than as a possible group membership contingent on history, intersubjectivity, salience, or the cultural content of ties (McLean 2016). Some steps have been taken in this direction; for example, network approaches have demonstrated that there is evidence that it is the democratic IGOs rather than the states in the democratic IGO–state network that are socializing states to be less conflictual (Montgomery 2016). Other results are contested, with some arguing that democracy itself spreads through all IGOs (Torfason and Ingram 2010), while others find that it only spreads through defensive alliances (Cranmer, Desmarais, and Campbell 2019). Still, much is lacking in the way of narrowing down through what relational processes democracies come to see each other as being in a commonly identified group (or not).

In addition to the imputation of networks from similarities, new measures are being created that align much more closely with existing IR notions rather than with social network concepts. There is nothing inherently wrong with this; indeed, this is a key area in which IR can contribute to the development of network analysis (Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery 2009). For example, new systemic measures have been invented, such as network polarization, a measure of how much state networks overlap (Maoz et al. 2005; Maoz 2006). This variable is used in the same way that, for example, the notion of a hegemonic defense burden is used: as a single variable that attempts to predict the general conflict propensity of the entire international system (Oneal and Russett 1999). There is a solid theoretical basis in IR for the idea that polarization might cause conflict: in particular, if military alliances are polarized (and, possibly more importantly, rigid), conflicts may be more likely to occur due to a lack of flexibility in the system to adjust to changes. However, this mechanism must be demonstrated (just like any other cross-applied theory) to function in observed networks, such as trade, or assumed networks, such as shared religion or language. Moreover, treating a system's structure in a uniform way is contrary to both relationalist approaches and SNA, which treat structure as a "lumpy" and heterogeneous influence that has radically different effects on different groups and nodes depending upon their positions in the system.

Apart from systemic characteristics, initial (re)uses in IR have tended to use the tools of network analysis to measure qualities of states or dyads rather than groups. IR scholars remain focused firmly on states as individual actors, a "substantialist" rather than a "relationalist" approach to IR (Jackson and Nexon 1999). Network characteristics are often calculated for monads (various measures of centrality) or dyads (strength of ties, common membership), then used as if they represented static properties that stand on their own rather than contingent ties that have to be created and recreated constantly by agents. Measures that are mostly used as intermediate steps on the way to discussing group membership and group properties, such as structural distance, have been used to determine the similarity of networks of two actors in an attempt to predict conflict. This reduces the complex notion of structural position to a generic sameness, substituting the distance measure for other measures of sameness already used in IR (Maoz et al. 2006; Signorino and Ritter 1999). It also assumes that structural equivalence, which posits that similarity of position leads to *similar behavior in general* (Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2006, 2009), would also predict that nodes in similar positions will act *toward each other* in particular ways, usually positively. Yet, theories of cooperation (at least with respect to position) require a measure of groupness, not a measure of sameness; even if A and B are close, the entire population needs to be examined to determine whether A and B are *relatively* close and therefore inhabit similar ecological niches. It will also depend on the particular roles that are coupled to these similar structural positions; for example, do two states that have ties to their former colonizer compete or cooperate? The answer depends on context: are they competing for, say, limited trade quotas, or are they pressed into a united front against

exploitation to overcome the malign influence of the *tertius gaudens* (Simmel 1950)? Not only positionality but intersubjectivity and history matter here: have they co-evolved over time to engage in practices that cement their relationship as competitors or cooperators? Finally, the use of the distance between two states as a raw "sameness" variable doesn't allow for testing of hypotheses about the relationship between the number of group members and their tendency to conflict (Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2006). Such uses are, nonetheless, embedded in existing IR theory. This is, in part, the problem, since many IR theories reduce complex logics to monadic, dyadic, or systemic hypotheses in the race to shave one's theories ever more parsimoniously with Ockham's razor.

The rise of the (ex-)physicists

These critiques of quantitative SNA work in IR have to do with a lack of demonstrating mechanisms or incompatibility with relationalism rather than the total abandonment of the origins of the data by physicists who are using network analysis to analyze what they term the "World Trade Web" (Li, Ying Jin, and Chen 2003; Garlaschelli and Loffredo 2005; Duan 2008; Fagiolo, Reyes, and Schiavo 2008; de Andrade and Rêgo 2018)—all published, weirdly enough, in *Physica A*. This odd neologism is apparently an attempt to draw an analogy to the "World Wide Web" in order to justify the use of the same tools that other current or former physicists have been using to great acclaim and even greater citation counts (Watts and Strogatz 1998; Watts 1999, 2003; Barabási and Albert 1999; Barabási 2002). This is a second departure from relationalist approaches, since any underlying intersubjectivity and history captured in the data is stripped out, leaving a set of relations without any real content or context. While the separation of form from content was an early foundation of sociological work in networks (Simmel 1908), the gains from this abstraction have been almost entirely on the micro-network scale (e.g. triads, cycles, strength of weak ties). When moving to the macro scale and asserting that there are underlying similarities between networks that (ostensibly) have similar network structures, new "findings" are the result of surface-level analysis without any deeper insights.

These articles and books have the virtue of popularizing and bringing attention to network analysis; yet the 'discovery' of ubiquitous power-law distributions in networks is similar to the recent political science '(re)discovery' of SNA: they largely take a very narrow and ahistorical view of network analysis (Downey 2004; Urry 2004; Crossley 2005; Scott 2014). It is somewhat of a surprise that so much has been made of the commonality of power-law distributions; such distributions arise because the mechanisms that underlie the distribution produce mathematically similar outcomes, not because they are somehow the same phenomenon. Two characteristics that both have power-law distributions do not really have any more similarity than those that are both normally distributed. Indeed, early research on power laws found the distributions to be

"more normal than Normal" and "rather common and unsurprising" (Fox Keller 2005: 1063). While similar tools can be used to study phenomena with common mathematical representations, lack of careful attention to the context, content, and meaning of the networks in question can lead to apparent superficial similarities, which seems to be what has occurred as these physicists engaged in "the enthusiastic testing of those models on nearly every kind of network that researchers could imagine (and for which they could locate machine-readable data on the structure)" (Downey 2004: 164). A better phenomenological description of instrumentitis would be difficult to find. It is unclear what the added value is of this work, other than throwing increasing computing power at enhanced data sets, to the contributions that had already been made by the original pioneers in random graph theory, small worlds theory, and the strength of weak ties (Erdös and Rényi 1959, 1960; Milgram 1967; Travers and Milgram 1969; Granovetter 1973, 1983).

The new "network science"[3] mania in physics, like the older "chaos theory,"[4] while capturing the popular imagination, ultimately boils down to two things: networks can be "scale-free" (meaning that degree distributions follow a power law: a few nodes have most of the ties, while there is a long tail of nodes with few ties) or a "randomly clustered" (clumps of highly-connected groups have few ties to other groups) small world, or sometimes both. The requirements to be one or the other are not high. However, when actual power-law fits as opposed to speculative graphs were done, only 7 of the 24 discrete-data networks and 10 of the 24 continuous-data networks used in these analyses were statistically significant at a generous $p < 0.1$ cut-off (Clauset, Shalizi, and Newman 2009). Follow-on work found scale-free networks to be empirically rare: only 4 per cent of the networks studied were convincingly scale-free, and no social network studied was more than weakly scale-free (Broido and Clauset 2019). As for small worlds, as one text puts it, "Any network can be a small-world network so long as it has some way of embodying order and yet retains some small amount of disorder" (Watts 2003: 99) Whether any real-world network does not meet this property is an exercise left to the reader. Watts claims that physicists "are almost perfectly suited to invading other people's disciplines, being not only extremely clever but also generally much less fussy than most about the problems they choose to study" (Watts 2003: 61).[5] Yet, this is precisely the problem: being less fussy about the problems means being less attentive to the data itself; this is less the problem of not seeing the forest for the trees and more seeing the forest as an inconvenient obstacle to the real treasure that lies underground where alleged polymaths carry out poorly-theorized data fracking.[6] Treating ties and nodes as static ignores the property that ties share with all structures: they are created, recreated, and destroyed in a dynamic fashion through performances by agents. Additionally, treating nodes and ties as homogenous ignores the historical trajectory that led to the formation, maintenance, and possibilities for future dissolution of these networks. Finally, they exclude the very real effects that power, domination,

and inequality have on these processes, as well as the intentions of the actors and the meanings that these ties have for them.

Back to the future?

More recent trends have indicated at least a partial movement back toward network concepts more compatible with a relationalist approach rather than substantialist ones; for example, indirect, third-party ties have become increasingly emphasized, although these are coupled with IR theories about information more often than social theories of affect or social relations (Maoz et al. 2007; Dorussen and Ward 2008; Corbetta and Dixon 2005; Corbetta 2010, 2013, 2015; Corbetta and Grant 2012). Newer network methodologies that attempt to account for network processes have slowly been gaining more prominence, including latent space models (LSM) (Krivitsky and Handcock 2008), stochastic actor-oriented models (SAOMs) (Snijders, van de Bunt, and Steglich 2010), and exponential-family random graph models (ERGM) (for guides to model selection, see Cranmer et al. 2017; Desmarais and Cranmer 2017). For example, the latter can now account for many network mechanisms, including popularity effects, reciprocity, inertia, similarities, differences, cycles, and triads. Importantly, history can also now be taken into account in a fashion, since further extensions to the ERGM model have allowed for studying time-based network evolution (TERGM) (Leifeld, Cranmer, and Desmarais 2018) as well as generalized models that can handle valued ties (GERGM) (Desmarais and Cranmer 2012). SAOMs such as simulation investigation for empirical network analysis (SIENA) incorporate similar advancements, but follow a more individual-based rather than relational model, modeling "choices" made by individual nodes to proffer or accept a network tie. When SIENA was compared with TERGM, the relational ERGM approach often provided a better fit even in data sets where the data-generating process was thought to be individualistic, such as a friendship network in a Dutch school class observed across multiple times (Leifeld and Cranmer 2019). This suggests that other processes that are generally assumed to be the result of individual choices may be better modeled through intersubjective, relational processes instead.

Some new work is also following a more promising path, in part by using data that is more "network-like" in character and by integrating social network theory as well as tools. This is not to say that these forms of measuring or imputing ties are not potentially flawed as well. One of the most widely used network variables, mutual membership in international institutions of various types (Russett, Oneal, and Davis 1998; Oneal and Russett 1999; Kim and Barnett 2000; Kim and Barnett 2007; Moore, Eng, and Daniel 2003; Maoz et al. 2006; Ward 2006; Dorussen and Ward 2008; Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2006, 2008, 2009; Henke 2017) is an affiliation rather than a direct tie. While it can (usually) be assumed that mutual membership in institutions leads to more opportunities for mutual interaction and socialization (Johnston 2001), this does not

necessarily lead to positive ties and so should be used with some caution. One advantage of this data is that for IGOs, the data exists from 1815 through to 1960 every five years, and from 1965 through to 2014 for every year (Pevehouse et al. 2020). Another question is whether the tie strength imputed from such affiliations is a measure of some underlying affinity or whether it constitutes a tie in and of itself. Membership is also problematic because, unlike underlying ties, it tends to be ratcheted: international institutions rarely die or eject or otherwise lose members (Ingram 2006); consequently, just as some neoliberal institutionalists view these institutions as congealed power, network analysts must view these, to some extent, as congealed ties (Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2006).

Directly measured ties are, for network analysts and relationalists alike, the most valuable and least problematic (in terms of properly measuring ties) data. Recent efforts have expanded the number of international data sets with directly measured ties; three stand out as existing for a sufficient number of years and countries as to be able to chart changes and growth over time: diplomatic recognition, arms proliferation, and international trade. Diplomatic recognition data is perhaps the most valuable, as it is available for a long period of time (1817–2005) (Bayer 2006), is directed rather than symmetrical (A's recognition of B may be different than B's recognition of A), and even measures the strength of recognition (chargé d'affaires, minister, and ambassador). It is also one of the least used as a network indicator; while some studies have used it as a unit characteristic (Boehmer, Gartzke, and Nordstrom 2004; Jo and Gartzke 2007), until recently few have used this data as a network. The latest work has employed ERGMs and SAOMs to demonstrate the importance of reciprocity, sociality, popularity, transitivity, and homophily in diplomatic relations (Kinne 2014; Duque 2018). There are some weaknesses in this particular data set; it is only recorded every five years, and it is very dense (in the sense that most countries have relations with many other countries), limiting its ability to be used for density-sensitive measures and concepts such as betweenness or brokerage.

Arms supply and proliferation data for small arms and light weapons (SALW), major conventional weapons (MCW), and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) show a great deal of potential for network analysis but have so far been infrequently used apart from visualizations or standard dyadic models (Kinsella and Montgomery 2017). There are a few studies that have used ERGMs to account for network features of the global arms market in MCW using the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) data, which are available from 1950 through the most recent calendar year and demonstrate that while new trade relationships are initially driven by network effects and security, transfers persist based on receivers' military expenditures. Moreover, security considerations dominated during the Cold War and after 2001, with economic considerations only becoming significant during the 1990s (Willardson 2013; Thurner et al. 2019; Lebacher, Thurner, and Kauermann 2021).

Trade data is only available from 1948 to the present, although it is also directed and valued (as opposed to binary). Applying advanced network tools to the data set has yielded some surprising findings: for example, LSMs have shown that workhorse gravity models for trade do a poor job at fitting real-world data due to their lack of network effects such as reciprocity and clusterability (Ward, Ahlquist, and Rozenas 2013), and SAOM models have demonstrated that trade policies do not seem to diffuse with trade itself (Mohrenberg 2017). Trade data is recorded for every year (a significant strength) but suffers from missing values. While superb efforts have been made to fill in the missing data (Gleditsch 2002), it does mean that using the sets available in an unconscious manner is highly problematic.

Relationalism and SNA

There have been some recent promising developments in the use of SNA in IR. One area in which IR scholars have moved ahead is in analyzing how network structures affect behavior. While much of the sociological work involves mapping structures or analyzing inequality, the concern of many political scientists with how these networks affect behavior (whether of individuals, dyads, or groups) is a worthwhile goal for SNA. In particular, scholars have been grappling with how network structures (although often suffering from the problems enumerated above) affect conflict (Maoz 2001, 2006; Maoz et al. 2005, 2006, 2007; Maoz 2010; Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2006, 2008, 2012; Kim and Barnett 2007; Corbetta 2013; Dorussen and Ward 2008; Montgomery 2016). There is currently little consensus among these pieces as to which particular aspects of international networks most affect conflict, and many of them suffer from the methodological shortcomings enumerated in this chapter. Nonetheless, there is a distinct trend toward using theories and tools that are designed to operate in tandem on data that is appropriate to use for network analysis.

While these recent developments have moved SNA back toward appropriate data and theories and have applied them to outcomes of interest to IR scholars, it is unclear whether these developments also restore compatibility with relationalism. For example, finding that the centrality score of a state in a network increases the likelihood of that state initiating a conflict is only a partial movement toward a relational approach, since although it does use a network attribute to explain conflict, it still posits that conflict as being caused by an individual characteristic. A more relational approach, by contrast, would attempt to locate a locus for action in the interaction between two states, perhaps by looking at their relative centrality scores (e.g. Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2006). Some types of centrality scores are more relational than others; for example, degree centrality simply sums over all direct incoming ties, whereas eigenvector centrality weights those incoming ties by the importance of each of the nodes from which the ties come. Consequently, the latter takes into account all of the ties in a

connected group, rather than simply the direct ties, making for a relational analysis that incorporates an entire subsystem of relations rather than each node's immediate neighborhood.

Certain incompatibilities will likely always remain between relational approaches and SNA. In particular, there is an inherent problem with coding for quantitative analysis in that it requires a freezing of meaning and a significant degree of abstraction, both of which are contrary to a thick relational approach. The bootstrapping problem for identification of nodes prevents a complete ontological commitment to treating relations as prior to entities as well. Finally, in practice much of the data that is, and will be, used for SNA tends to be somewhat problematic from a relational ontology perspective, whether due to assumptions about the static nature of relations required to use the data as network ties, missing data, or using data that has been abstracted from its original meaning. Overall, the revival of SNA in IR has been highly uneven; fitting SNA into IR has been mostly resulted in the theories associated with SNA getting short shrift rather than an expansion of IR theory beyond its traditional concerns with the monadic, dyadic, and systemic. This is rather unfortunate, as SNA has a great deal of promise for dealing with mid-level systemic analysis: what is called variously the "micro-structure" rather than the "macro-structure" (Wendt 1999: 12–13), the "… meso levels that are neither wholly micro nor macro" (Victor, Montgomery, and Lubell 2017b: 8), or (most simply) the interaction or transaction level of analysis, which is exactly where relationalism has the best chance of succeeding. Nevertheless, recent simultaneous moves towards analyses of conflict in IR and back towards the SNA theories that are tightly coupled with SNA tools demonstrate the so-far unrealized potential of SNA to contribute towards a relational IR.

Notes

1. If the word "organization" can be substituted for the word "network" throughout a piece without any loss of meaning, it's not network analysis.
2. I thank Tanisha Fazal for bringing this to my attention as the cause of some discontinuities in state membership.
3. As with any other discipline that requires the modifier "science" at the end of it to proclaim its scientific status, such claims should be subject to scrutiny: we need not refer to "physics science," "chemistry science," or "biology science."
4. Ultimately, the last gasp of the old mechanistic-deterministic world view: really, things interact in regular, predictable ways; we just can't predict it because things are complicated. Complexity theory has since broken with this determinism.
5. The author himself is entirely guilty of the same but is trying to be conscientious about it.
6. I thank Sarah Parkinson for this turn of phrase as well as extensive suggestions regarding qualitative network pieces in the literature review.

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CHAPTER 4

FIELDS

From Social Interaction to the Analysis of Power

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INTRODUCTION

From the Davos World Economic Forum to the nomadic World Social Forum; from the transnational scientific field that produces vaccines against COVID-19 to the global art field that consecrates Damien Hirst; from the UN General Assembly annual meeting to the global tech market pitting firms, governments, consumers, and activists against each other, one could argue that globalization has been characterized by the spread of global fields that bring people, firms, political actors, and organizations in contact with each other across borders.

Yet, if globalization only meant an increase in political, economic, cultural, and social interaction across the planet, there wouldn't be much value-added in the concept of global field. To be sure, a field is relational, but so are several other concepts presented in this volume. What is the analytical purchase of fields as a concept, compared to, say, arenas, interdependence, regimes, institutions, networks, assemblages, or transnational communication?

In a nutshell, we believe that the value-added of fields is that they *enmesh* structures, practices, rules, culture, and power and make them *empirically observable* in social relations. Following Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam (2012: 9), we argue that fields are "the fundamental units of collective action in society." They are "constructed mesolevel social order[s] in which actors … are attuned to and interact with one another on the basis of shared … understandings about the purpose of the field, relationships to others in the field …, and the rules governing legitimate action in the field." According to this definition, not every social relation is constitutive of a field; neither is the mere existence of rules, patterns of action, or shared meaning; power does not, in and of itself, beget a field. For a field to exist, all these elements have to be present at once. In that sense, field theory is relational, but it is also holistic.

In recent years, the concept of field has enjoyed growing success among international political sociologists, who use it as an analytical lens to think about the coexistence of cooperation and conflict, stability and change, history and agency, and domination and resistance in the meso-level social orders that make up the "world." Unlike realists and

liberals, field theorists tend to eschew the language of self- or national interest unless it is problematized; unlike constructivists, they avoid talking about norms, intersubjectivity, and identity *in abstracto*. What brings international political sociologists to use fields is a shared vision of International Relations (IR) as a global structure of social relations shot through with meaning, rules, and power. In IR, field theory provides new insights into the nature of global order and the relational dynamics of contestation and change.

As we will see in this chapter, not all field theories are the same, however. While some International Political Sociology (IPS) scholars defend a stringent definition of fields, close to Pierre Bourdieu's sociology, others (e.g. institutionalists) promote a broader one. The former emphasize social structures of *power*, the latter social arenas of *interaction*. In this chapter, we adopt a pluralistic perspective, which distinguishes these approaches for analytical purposes, while ultimately calling for a common theoretical ambition.

The origins of field theory in IR

While fields are often associated with the name of Pierre Bourdieu in IPS, it is less often the case in sociology as a discipline, where the concept is used with different meanings in different intellectual traditions. But IPS came to fields through the discovery of Bourdieu in the context of a broader sociological turn, whose influence and limitations must be addressed if one is to understand the origins of field theory in IR.

The 1990s saw the rise of constructivism in IR. On the one hand, a linguistic-based approach emerged in the form of discourse analysis, claiming a critical epistemology and with close ties to continental philosophy. On the other, a more conventional approach, wedded to the positivist epistemology of realism and liberalism, drew on the Durkheimian tradition to add norms and identity as important variables to the traditional focus on state interests. In 1996, Martha Finnemore's seminal review essay in *International Organization* discussed the work of John Meyer and the Stanford school of sociology to analyze institutions as mental schemes and cultural representations (Finnemore 1996). In comparative politics, Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor (1996), in an equally influential *Political Studies* article, distinguished sociological institutionalism from rational choice and historical institutionalism.

The irony is that the sociological institutionalism that was about to make its way into political science and IR was not, at the time, a dominant tradition in the sociological discipline. A book edited by Powell and DiMaggio (1991) was enjoying considerable success in organizational analysis but the discipline, like all social sciences, was traversed by many currents, from Marxism to systems theory and from methodological individualism to network analysis. If one were to look for a dominant classical

influence, it would probably have been Weberian, not Durkheimian. While among the major living intellectual forces of the discipline, Bourdieu was a sociologist of domination, of the state, of violence—not a norm and identity theorist. The result of this irony is that, by the turn of the twenty-first century, sociology was associated in IR with a specific approach, based on the diffusion of norms and the constitution of identities, that any sociologist would have recognized but not necessarily adhered to. In particular, sociological institutionalism and conventional constructivism were implicitly associated in IR debates with a lack of attention to power, violence, domination, and the state—four phenomena which, at the same time, enjoyed great scientific prestige in the discipline of sociology, thanks to scholars like Pierre Bourdieu but also Michael Mann or Charles Tilly.

In IR, if we except Richard Ashley's (1984) early attention to Bourdieu's work, Didier Bigo, Anna Leander, Stefano Guzzini, Peter Jackson, Vincent Pouliot, Michael Williams, and Rebecca Adler-Nissen were among the first scholars to put the work of the French sociologist front and center. In Cameroon, Yves-Alexandre Chouala (2002) was an early, and too often neglected, adopter of field theory in international studies. But other key contributions, such as a special issue of *International Political Sociology* (the journal) coordinated by Didier Bigo or an important volume on Bourdieu and IR edited by Rebecca Adler-Nissen (2011) did not clearly highlight the relevance of fields in IR. Quickly, Bourdieu's influence in IR was subsumed by the practice turn whose proponents tended to be a bit shy about using fields (Adler and Pouliot 2011).

Sociology, for its part, was long blinded by "methodological nationalism." This is especially true of Bourdieu's school, which almost exclusively investigated the French case (with a few comparisons, including with Algeria and the United States). At best, the global level could be a "milieu of milieus" (Marcel Mauss's term) or a "weak field" (Antoine Vauchez's). Yves Dezalay is one of the few direct collaborators of Bourdieu's who tackled international fields, notably with his study of "international brokers" in commercial arbitration and in Latin America (Dezalay and Garth 1996, 2002). In the cultural sphere, Gisèle Sapiro took on Bourdieu's late interest in the "international circulation of ideas." Other French or French-educated scholars, notably Antonin Cohen, Niilo Kauppi, Didier Georgakakis, Mikael Rask Madsen, David Swartz, and Antoine Vauchez, applied field theory to European politics. Beyond France, John Hagan and Ron Levi (2005) analyzed international criminal law as a field, while Julian Go and Monika Krause (2016) sought to "field" transnational studies, an attempt that morphed into global historical sociology (Go and Lawson 2017). In parallel, a group of Berkeley sociologists applied the concept of field to a selection of emergent global phenomena: Lisa Stampnitzky on antiterrorism, Stephanie Mudge on economics, Tom Medvetz on think tanks, or Frédéric Mérand on the military. They and other sociologists drew somewhat loosely, or syncretically, from Bourdieu's work, which could be put in dialogue with intellectual traditions, such as systems theory in Germany, world-systems theory, or symbolic interactionism in the United States.

Under the umbrella of IPS, field theory brought these groups together, offering them a common, relational lens to enlighten international phenomena, but only up to a point. The discussion was hampered by a lack of agreement on what it takes for a field to become an object of inquiry. Sociologists in the Bourdieusian tradition have tended to consider that a field is not only a space of interaction but also a structure of power and domination among heavily socialized agents around a single stake. This, for example, would preclude using fields as a spatial metaphor to analyze relations among states. Conversely, constructivists and global historical sociologists have tended to adopt a broader definition of fields, which allows them, for example, to rethink international hegemony with a field-centric vocabulary (Nexon and Neumann 2018).

What is a field?

In his classic survey, John Levi Martin (2003) presents field theory as the view that the position of actors vis-à-vis each other produces regularities in individual action. Indeed, field theorists agree that their main unit of analysis is a relational space of positions subject to social forces. Mapping out a field generates social topologies—positions linked with position-takings, as Bourdieu would have it—that have either constitutive or explanatory value. Yet, as Steinmetz (2016: 101) argues, "[f]ieldness is a continuous variable, not a binary, either-or-condition." Indeed, we argue that there is a continuum between a *thin* conception of the field that comes from US interactionism and institutionalism and a *thick* conception of the field that comes from French structuralism.

The thin conception focuses on organizational or institutional fields, in which the behavior and identity of corporate actors are constituted by their interaction with each other. These actors have no essence but develop ways of doing and thinking through a process that is immanent to the field. In IR, this conception of the field is germane to approaches that emphasize practices, intersubjectivity, and symbolic interactions between states actors or diplomats that constitute their identities vis-à-vis each other. The focus here is on social structures of interaction. For example, the diffusion of norms and standards has been studied in transnational organizational fields made up of experts and professionals, such as European security (Lavallée 2011) or multilateral trade governance (Hopewell 2015; Eagleton-Pierce 2013). We also find uses where fields are almost substitutes for state-centric international systems, albeit socially embedded ones (Nexon and Neumann 2018). In a similar vein, Pouliot "brings states back in" (2016: 194) field theory to map out multilateral pecking orders at the United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), or the European Union (EU).

The thick conception, by contrast, focuses on social structures of power. Truly positional, it assumes that power underlies social relations and is, in fact, the main stake of these relations (the "stake at stake", says Bourdieu). In this conception, social

fields are about organized striving around positions which lead to principles of vision and division. While interactionists and institutionalists pay attention to agency, structuralists assume that agents are rather more socialized, sometimes to the point, critics would say, that they seem like place-holders. Bourdieusian sociologists emphasize domination more than struggles, while historical sociologists emphasize struggles more than domination, but the general idea is that fields are agonistic games in which there are winners and losers who are caught up in social structures of power. In general, the focus is on dominant groups or what Kauppi (2018), in his analysis of European academic, political, and media "transnational fields," calls "elites." Didier Bigo's work on security (2005) illustrates an early attempt to explain relations of domination at the international level and the internationalization of specific professional groups (Daho and Vauchez 2020). In global historical sociology, Go (2008) introduced the concept of "global field" to analyze British and US imperial strategies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Combining Bourdieu with institutional theory and IR, he shows how different kinds of hegemony emerge from a multidimensional space of dominant and dominated groups, including states.

One common characteristic among thin and thick conceptions is the fact that, to make analytical sense, a field must be relatively autonomous. Autonomization describes a historical process of differentiation through the emergence of common stakes, rules, norms, or beliefs that give the field its own logic, different from other fields. In striving for a common stake, field agents become united by what Bourdieu describes as an *illusio* (Bourdieu 2009: 179). The *illusio* represents the belief that the field's stakes are meaningful (Neveu 2018: 364). Whether the field is rather consensual (as in the thin conception) or very agonistic (as in the thick conception), a collective sense of purpose suggests that the game being played in the field is worth playing. But it also means that the rules of the game, the position of actors vis-à-vis each other, or symbolic representations that shape one field (say, the global humanitarian field) may turn out to be completely irrelevant (or be refracted) in another field (say, global finance). Its degree of autonomy is thus key to the identification of a field. Without some specificity as to the rules and stakes of interaction, a field is not distinguishable from other spaces of relations. But scholars vary in their perception of the required degree and form of differentiation. Particularly in thicker conceptions, the process of autonomization is more than just a process of specialized interaction. First, the "rules of the game" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 99) form the backdrop against which social and political order is established in a specific social context. The autonomy of the field enables the exercise of power by those able to impose their principles of domination. Existing social structures are naturalized, taken-for-granted, which Bourdieu describes through the concept of "doxa" (Bourdieu 1977: 164). These structures, which shape social dispositions toward the world ("habitus"), tend to obfuscate, and thus reproduce, existing power structures. Second, each field is based on a specific form of capital whose accumulation is the logic of the field (Bourdieu 1996a: 142). Capital, whether

cultural, symbolic, or economic in character, confers power, so actors struggle to accumulate and monopolize capital (Swartz 1997: 117). But, like the valued capital, these positional hierarchies are field-specific. In the end, the process of autonomization also creates barriers to entry for those who fail to navigate these structures of meaning in a way that is appropriate to the logic of the field.

For structuralists, fields that do not follow the rather stringent criteria of autonomy we just sketched out are perceived as weak, in the sense that their internal and external borders are porous (Vauchez and Witte 2013; Mudge and Vauchez 2012). But this does not mean that their social effects are nonexistent (Vauchez 2008: 136, 137). For example, Angèle Christin points to the limits of the "fielded" (2016: 230) character of interaction in her investigation of transnational journalism. Yet, in thin conceptions of fields, the differentiation processes may diverge from a strict autonomization logic. For example, institutional theories rarely emphasize the manifestation of field-specific capitals (Bartley 2021: 24). Here, again, it is less the exercise of power enabled by differentiation and normalization of power structures but rather the interaction among different groups (Lavallée 2017: 416) that contributes to the emergence of common stakes. The differentiation of the field is based on potentially institutionalized structures of intersubjectively shared meanings (Greenwood and Suddaby 2006: 26), even though power may still be part of the equation (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 148).

Whether they adhere to a thin or a thick conception, field theorists thus assume that fields, as the fundamental units of collective action, have tangible effects on individuals and groups. That is because they provide a social structure according to which rules are made (institutions), ideas are assimilated (culture or habitus), and resources (or capital) are distributed. This social structure can be observed in social relations and social practices: for example, the strategy of a firm can be explained by its resources; its position vis-a-vis other firms, as an incumbent or a challenger; as well as dominant social representations and rules of the game in the economic field. Field effects are at once structural, material, cultural, and institutional. The point is that an individual has access to different resources, follows different rules, thinks differently, and behaves differently toward others by virtue of being involved in one field and not another. The constraints may be strong (as in structuralism) or weak (as in interactionism), but social action cannot be explained without understanding the properties of the field as a whole (i.e. internal and external). It is in that sense that all field theory is relational and holistic.

Based on these conceptual elements, we can begin to see what distinguishes field theory from other popular relational concepts such as networks and assemblages. While field theory shares with network theory a certain agnosticism about what the right level of analysis is (there is no a priori distinction between local, national, and global), constructing the appropriate level of analysis is at the core of the field theory's research agenda. And while field theory suggests, like actor-network theory, that there is an imbrication of social and material (including technological) elements in interconnected

social realities, it is particularly concerned with the boundaries of these relations, the existence of which actor-network theory's assemblages (*agencements*) seem to preclude. By contrast, with fields, which are not only relational but also positional, networks and assemblages also appear relatively "flat" in terms of power. Although networks may produce dominant positions through, for example, brokerage, this is only one option among many, whereas field theory, at least in its thick form, focuses on domination as a structuring principle. As for actor-network theory, one could argue that it has a conception of power that is more malleable—perhaps productive but ever changing and impossible to capture—than even the thinnest conceptions of field we discuss in this chapter.

What do global fields look like?

In the introduction, we listed social spaces that we believe qualify as global fields. Go (2008: 207) defines a global field as a "worldwide arena in which states or other actors (corporations, nongovernmental institutions, international organizations) compete with each other over species of capital." Following Mann (1986), these capitals may include economic, military, ideological, or political resources. But apart from the fact that it is "worldwide" and possibly includes states as actors, what distinguishes a global field from a national one?

First, a global field must be relatively autonomous from national fields. Having been mostly applied at the national level (Sapiro 2013: 71), field theory is sometimes criticized for its methodological nationalism. A good way to start thinking about a global field is, however, to look for a global stake (or *illusio*) around which structured relations or collective striving takes place and global practices are likely to emerge. In other words, a truly global field must have its own global logic. While globalization means that it is easy to find global issues (which were not absent in the past, as subaltern and connected history tells us), it is not as easy to delineate a global field, with a single stake and clear boundaries, that is not simply an unstructured fog of social relations. Indeed, the formation of fields beyond relatively homogenous (national) contexts likely reduces the field's structural rigidity (Kauppi 2018: 69–88). Kauppi and Rask Madsen (2008: 100) suggest that we must therefore adapt our definition to make fields "structurally speaking, less 'firmed up' and much less stable." The question of autonomy becomes even murkier when considering that fields in the global or transnational realm have linkages to national or local fields (Dezalay and Rask Madsen 2012: 441). Yet, autonomy, as Krause (2018) points out, can vary not only in degree but also in form. The process of autonomization and differentiation of the field may play out differently depending on the extent and kinds of linkages with other (national) fields (Buchholz 2016). For example, Dezalay shows that accumulating international legal capital is important insofar as it is reinvested at the national level. Yves Gingras, for his part,

refers to an "inter-national pole" of the national scientific field, which is more open to the international scene (Gingras 2002: 37; Dubois, Gingras, and Rosental 2016).

Second, a global field must have global field effects. Resources, social dispositions, world views, and constraints have to be traced back to the global level in a way that shapes action among field participants. Again, we may have to accept the fact that global fields are less constraining on social actors than national fields. In his structuralist conception, Bourdieu famously thought there was little room for agency; in his view, fields are strongly backed up by the state and its symbolic power, which makes it unlikely that the "dominated" will ever successfully challenge the "dominant." Is there more room for change at the global level, since fields seem to be less "structured," and therefore less "structuring"? Several authors (Mérand 2010; Stampnitzky 2013; Neumayer 2017) suggest that entrepreneurship is indeed more likely in global fields because of their "weak," "interstitial" nature. Some scholars have thus shifted their attention to *relations between fields*. Eyal (2013: 175) theorizes the "thick boundary zone" of undetermined spaces between fields as sources of change and dynamism. Fields may be nested, or they may intersect with other fields, or they might be structurally similar to other fields (Go 2020: 144). This begs the question of whether global fields exist or make sense without an underlying field of power, perhaps with its own "noblesse du monde," which determines the hierarchy between fields and their dominant form of capital. Empirical analyses suggest that this element is critical (Guzzini 2006: 14–17). For example, Steinmetz (2008: 596) highlights the linkages between fields in colonies and colonizing states through a global field of colonial power. Likewise, Musgrave and Nexon (2018: 9) draw on the hierarchical relations between fields to analyze the constitution of global order.

These considerations suggest that, while not everything deserves to be called a global field, a certain degree of flexibility is probably required when applying the concept of field in IR. International finance fits the global field criteria better than, say, scientific research or popular music. Even when fields are autonomous, the trajectory of most individuals, organizations, firms, and political actors that populate global fields tends to have its origins in national fields, which socialized them and where they often keep their home base. The life chances of these actors may be increasingly shaped at the global level, but the resources and the social representations acquired in national fields remain fundamental. For example, this is the case of multinational corporations, European judges, or expatriate workers—all engaged in global fields but with national resources, social dispositions, and social fate.

The contribution of field theory to IR

In this section, we summarize and evaluate the contribution of contemporary field theorists to two key debates in IR: about the nature of global order and about

contestation and change.

On global order

In a discipline that still defines itself through the sharp distinction between international anarchy and national sovereignty, field theory looks at the question of global order through "constructed mesolevel orders." Traditionally state centric, the discipline has struggled to understand world politics as a truly global rather than an international space (see also Bially Mattern and Zarakol 2016). While the exclusive focus on states and the conceptual foregrounding of anarchy has decreased considerably, IR scholarship still wrestles with the conceptual implications of porous boundaries, transnational linkages, and the prevalence of hierarchies. Although, as we have seen, this was also long true of field theory, a relational ontology that recognizes specific functions or attributes are not automatically representative of the power position that actors assume in a specific social environment (Savage and Williams 2008: 16). Rather than steering the analysis along the formal characteristics of states, international organizations, or nonstate actors, field theory allows the conceptualization of various forms of interaction between them.

Compared to, for example, the concept of networks, field theory also adds a more specific and multidimensional understanding of the practices of domination and power. A key contribution in this regard is Vincent Pouliot's (2016) *International Pecking Orders*, which argues that international organizations produce hierarchies that are not reducible to a shallow reading of the international system. To analyze global order, Pouliot looks at the constructed meso-level orders of multilateral diplomacy. Empirically, he uses multiple correspondence analysis—a methodological approach that is popular among field theorists—to map out the "unleveled topography" of multilateral fields such as the UN, NATO, or the EU and their specific logics (Pouliot 2016: 209).

One of the most prominent and conceptually most sophisticated examples of the productive relationship between field theory and IR is the rise of field-inspired "hegemonic order theory" (Ikenberry and Nexon 2019). Highlighting the need for a broader and theoretically more diverse account of the different dimensions of hegemonic order, Nexon and Neumann (2018) draw on field theory to re-conceptualize traditional hegemonic-order approaches in IR (Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990; Nye Jr 2004). Hegemony is understood in terms of the domination of a "global field" characterized by the distribution of economic and military capital and the understanding of symbolic capital as "a strategy of power" (Go 2008: 208). Drawing on the concept of "meta-capital," Nexon and Neumann (2018: 663) illustrate how even after their demise, hegemonic entities continue to leave considerable marks on the present global order, such as Roman influences on architecture in contemporary representational buildings. This emphasis on the prevailing influence of seemingly long-lost power

instills a sense of historicity into a discipline that often values prediction of the future rather than attention to the past (MacDonald 2009: 47). In a similar vein, through the concept of hegemonic field effects, McCourt (2021) shows that these changes are not limited to the fields subject to direct influence by the hegemon. Instead, global powers tend to export or import their organizational structures or institutions to surrounding fields. These surrounding fields may evolve similarly in a process Bourdieu calls "homology" (Bourdieu 2008: 73–78). McCourt illustrates the interconnected character of fields through the example of the Schuman Plan after the Second World War.

The concepts of political, cultural, or symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986, 1996b, 2002a) demonstrate the diversity of resources actors draw on in the struggle for power. This counteracts assumptions about the necessary pursuit of material power in IR and allows widening the range of "interests." Particularly, the notion of symbolic capital helps explain seemingly puzzling behavior by hegemons. Musgrave and Nexon (2018) draw on the notion of symbolic capital to explain why China and the United States made costly investments into explorations to the Indian Ocean in 1405 and outer space in 1961, respectively. Bridging strategic and constructivst accounts of power, they highlight how, in response to critical threats to their security, both countries perceived the necessity to establish domination through investments in symbolically laden policy areas. Similarly, Go (2008: 208) establishes that hegemons draw on alternative forms of capital not only to strengthen their domestic position but also to legitimize their global claim for dominance. As Williams's (2007) investigation of transformations in European and US security policies highlights, culture significantly shapes such practices of ordering. The relational approach to power both in and between fields points to dominating as well as empowering dimensions.

This differentiated understanding of hegemony not only resonates with calls for the recognition of the prevalence of hierarchies in IR (Bially Mattern and Zarakol 2016; Lake 2009) but also highlights how the provision and embeddedness of order shapes the action of hegemons (Ikenberry and Nexon 2019). The reconceptualization of social order shifts the focus away from the state and toward the complex webs of interrelations between actors that co-create order and power relations. Studying fields enables a productive investigation of, for example, commercial or nonmilitarized forms of security ordering (Abrahamsen and Williams 2010; Leander 2005) but also takes into account novel governance arrangements, such as multi-stakeholderism in internet governance (Radu 2019). In studying how actors and institutions are embedded in competing field-specific logics, field theory can also grasp pressures resulting from increasing institutional density (Greenwood et al. 2011), thereby complementing investigations of "regime complexity" in IR (Alter and Meunier 2009; Raustiala and Victor 2004).

When studying global order, field theory provides insights into relational dynamics not only within but also between institutions. For instance, Esteves and Assunção (2014) investigate the negotiation of official development assistance in the international

development field as "doxic" (from *doxa*, see above) practices torn between the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the UN. Villumsen Berling (2012) explores doxic battles in the definition of NATO's role in European security after the Cold War. Drawing on research in humanitarian activism and the International Red Cross, Dromi (2016) argues that national dynamics help constitute transnational fields, such as the humanitarian field (Krause 2014) through processes of translation and adaptation. From a thinner perspective on fields, scholars have similarly investigated a broad variety of topics including sustainability (Dingwerth and Pattberg 2009; Dingwerth 2017), agriculture (Schwindenhammer 2017), or private (Lake 2021) and global governance (Kjaer and Vetterlein 2018; Bartley 2021). Chaturvedi et al. (2021) combine field theory with institutional approaches, such as politicization (Zürn 2018) and contested multilateralism (Morse and Keohane 2014), in their investigation of international development. In contrast to the focus of the declining autonomy of the field, attention is paid here to the dynamics of situated ordering through interaction.

On contestation and change

In thick conceptions, but also in many thin conceptions, fields are structured by the relations between dominant and subordinate positions or incumbents and challengers (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 97; Fligstein and McAdam 2012). Combined with material factors, frames of perception and knowledge contribute to strengthening these positions, often to reproduce social order, sometimes to challenge it.

Interestingly, the academic field is part of the story. Academic research is not neutral but is itself subject to field dynamics (Heilbron 2013) and perpetuates dynamics of power. This includes a prevailing academic focus on the "West" (Krause 2016), colonial dynamics in gender expertise (Kunz, Prügl, and Thompson 2019), and the "racial order" (Emirbayer and Johnson 2008). Bourdieu himself believed in the power of "collective intellectuals," armed with their knowledge of power dynamics, to effect change. For example, through the revelation of hierarchization dynamics among specific groups and individuals (see also Emirbayer 1997), field theory uncovers colonial and imperialist structures, which may help "denaturalize" them. Go (2008) draws on field theory to investigate the formality of imperial practices of domination and argue that the geopolitical struggle in global imperial fields shaped the conditions in colonial subfields (see also Go 2020). Similarly, Steinmetz (2007) suggests that the competition for symbolic capital between colonial elites determined German colonial practices. The relational lens of field theory highlights that it is not the innate features of, for example, colonized and colonizing people that motivate their action. Instead, field theory foregrounds actor positions in their specific social environment as decisive factors (Go 2013: 64). The focus on positional struggles among actors also allows the investigation of groups that scholars tend to portray as passive, such as migrants (Gu and Lee 2020; Kim 2018; Joy, Game, and Toshniwal 2020). For example, in their investigation of the

field of international justice, Dixon and Tenove (2013) outline how field dynamics prevent victims from becoming sources of authoritative knowledge.

So while field theory may play a kind of emancipatory role, stability is the baseline expectation, especially in its thick conception of field theory (Villumsen Berling 2012). Close to Bourdieu's doxa, the notion of a "settled field" suggests that fields move toward a "stable consensus regarding rules of conduct and membership criteria" (Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 88–90). Here, the fact that participants in the field agree not only on the relevant capitals but also on the criteria for evaluation (Steinmetz 2016: 102) stabilizes relations of power in favor of the dominant. Scholars have drawn on these insights to analyze the genesis of professional fields (Bigo, Bonditti, and Olsson 2016; Büttner et al. 2015) or point to the creation of international objects (Danielsson 2020; Sending 2015) in the production of authority. The fixation of knowledge or specific meanings enables actors in key positions, such as the European Central Bank in economic governance (Mudge and Vauchez 2016; Lebaron 2008) or expert bodies in climate politics (Hughes 2015) to exercise symbolic power and shape political action.

To be sure, it is always possible that change will come about either through struggles or through external shocks. The recognition of the constructed character of social hierarchies also offers opportunities to explore them as a potential site of contestation (Barman 2013: 107; Bourdieu 1991). Bourdieu suggests that dominated people will eventually attempt to change the rules that have contributed to their domination (1996a: 127–28). So, struggle or conflict is an essential part of all accounts of fields. Yet, under which conditions may the dominated change "the rules of the game" and resist the exercise of symbolic domination? Here, there is more room for agency among field theorists who seek to incorporate other theoretical approaches, such as Andrew Abbott's theory of jurisdictional claims (see e.g. Obendiek 2022). Subject to open struggles or morphological changes, a field may be temporarily in flux, or ruptured, until a new settlement is found. For instance, Ruppert and Scheel (2019) track data scientists in their struggle to incorporate big data in the transnational field of statistics as part of their jockeying for position with statisticians. In her research on terrorism, Stampnitzky (2011, 2013) draws on Bourdieu's concept of "classification struggles" to define how actors attempt to entrench certain ideational structures to manifest their position in a social field. The establishment of terrorism as a "rational object" at the contested boundary between political and scientific claims legitimizes some actors' position of authority rather than others'. Frequently, the normalization of knowledge ends up stabilizing relations of power, for example in the context of the legalization of torture in US counterterrorism.

Another source of change may come from other fields, through exogenous shocks. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) highlight the boundaries of fields as areas of contestation and conflict. Drawing on examples from Chinese foreign policy, Loh (2018) similarly points to the high potential for disruption at the intersection of transnational fields. Even crises in the field are associated with external shocks rather than endogenous change.

Mérand suggests that as the result of an external shock, "a mismatch develops between a power structure that is changing, rules of the game that become less clear, and schemes of perception that tend to be sticky" (Mérand 2010: 352). Due to this mismatch, the field might be subject to change, for example through symbolic revolutions (Fowler 2020). Combining struggles and exogenous shock, the concept of hysteresis describes a third possibility for change, when the habitus of certain actors no longer fits with the structure of the field, either because the field has changed (morphological changes) or because an actor comes from another field (perhaps through an exogenous shock). Neumann and Pouliot use this Bourdieusian concept to explain the gap, and maladjustment, between Russia's quest for status and the field of international diplomacy. "Hysteresis," they write, "is a mismatch between the dispositions agents embody and the positions they occupy in a given social configuration. It is often at the root of symbolic struggles in social and political life, including those on the international stage" (Neumann and Pouliot 2011: 109). Similarly, Georgakakis (2017) outlines how the Brussels-based "Eurocracy" suffers from hysteresis, raising concerns about its diminishing capacity to autonomously define the specific stakes of its activities. Contrary to earlier expectations that the European bureaucratic field would gradually achieve greater autonomy over time (Georgakakis and Rowell 2013), he suggests that the democratization of the EU has, paradoxically, made it increasingly dependent on external demands.

Symbolic revolutions "bind fields together" (Fowler 2020: 443) in the sense that their transformative effects work across fields. In the transnational context, such transformations may also start in national fields. For example, Go explores anti-colonial nationalism as a mobilizing factor of resistance both within and between colonial fields (Go 2020: 146). Institutionalized practices of evaluation, quantification, and classification may contribute to change within or across transnational fields (Buchholz 2016). Martin Petzke (2016) illustrates how Christian missionaries and census practices by the British Empire contributed to the rise of a transnational religious field that permanently changed the concept of a "religion" in India. Drawing on a combination of field theoretical and network approaches, Hoover Wilson (2016) analyzes the transition to the modern administration of empires through a mix of authoritative claims and the translation of external ideas and effects.

By contrast with these rather low expectations for change, the thin conception of fields is more open to political entrepreneurship and agency. But the organizational literature's relative lack of attention to power has also meant that it traditionally expects more stability than contestation. Through the concept of "isomorphism," the organizational literature describes the increasing homogeneity of organizations in fields (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 2013). For example, Dingwerth and Pattberg (2009) argue that organizational fields in sustainability governance contribute to similarity among organizations. Kjaer and Vetterlein (2018) analyze the similarity of social processes, problems, and characteristics of regulatory processes in different governance institutions. Since the 1990s, however, organizational theory has also

increasingly focused on sources of dynamism, heterogeneity, and change in fields (Wooten and Hoffman 2008: 59). It has also paid more attention to political struggles. In *A Theory of Fields*, Fligstein and McAdam (2012) make a key analytical move by incorporating social movement theory into field analysis. This allows them to theorize how socially skilled challengers can generate frames and mobilize resources that will allow them to unsettle incumbents in a "strategic action field," especially when the field is subject to an exogenous shock or is in a state of rupture. Taylor and Cantwell (2015), for example, use this approach to analyze the dynamics of global competition in the US-dominated field of higher education, while Cornilleau (2019) maps out the strategic action field of modeling organizations in the global agriculture and food security business.

Conclusion: Is there a global field of power?

Simply defined as the view that the positions and relations of actors vis-à-vis each other produces regularities in individual action, field theory can be applied to a large variety of international phenomena from sports to nuclear strategy. The growing use of this concept by different schools of IR testifies to its flexibility and value-added. And to be clear, there is no reason why the concept of field should be monopolized by Bourdieusian sociologists. But as we have seen in this chapter, most field theorists, Bourdieusian or not, adopt a more stringent conception than this one, which makes global fields analytically distinct and empirically useful but also difficult to find.

Earlier in this chapter, we briefly touched upon fields of power, the arenas where dominant actors vie with each other over the relative value of the fields they dominate, a struggle over "meta-capital," which generates a hierarchical order. For Bourdieu, the state is the quintessential field of power, where economic, military, cultural, religious, administrative, and political elites compete with each other for societal domination on the basis of their privileged capital (say, military force vs economic capital vs cultural credentials), which they want to turn into the gold standard.

Now, if, as we have seen, globalization has multiplied the number of global fields, can we conclude that there is a global field of power? In other words, can there be a dominant principle of domination on the global level? For a thin theorist of fields, the question may not be that important. One can still get a lot of analytical purchase studying the global higher education field or the global art field without spending too much time on their relationship to each other or to global power dynamics. But the question matters for IPS because, ultimately, it is a question about the role of the state in IR. To the extent that the relative value of global fields, and the power of elites vis-à-vis each other, become adjudicated exclusively at the global level because it no longer derives from the national level, the world would have reached a stage of globalization (or international, or regionalization) beyond the nation-state. Otherwise, we are in a

situation where the global elite is, in fact, the internationalized fraction of the national elite (which is still an interesting topic of inquiry).

The "global field of empires" (Go 2020: 148) or even the EU (Mérand 2012) are interesting places to start thinking about forms of political authority that structure a whole variety of pre- or transnational fields by imposing, from the center, a "rate of exchange," a "meta-capital," say between religious and military capital in the Roman Empire or economic and political capital in the EU. One could imagine a "world of regions" in which the internal degree of social interaction inside regions across several spheres of activities would lead to structures of power and principles of vision and division that would be specific to regions. To be sure, these fields of power would not be as coherent as, say, the French state: by constitution, they would concern certain more globalized fields but not others that are less so; the field of power would thus not be a clearly delineated, hierarchical power container. This is also true of international organizations like the UN or the World Trade Organization (WTO), which, although multilateral fields in their own right, do not, for the moment, reach deep into our life chances.

That said, the possibility of a global field of power remains a tantalizing way to operationalize emerging forms of international authority which generate their own global elites and their own global contestation—what Michael Zürn calls "reflexive authority" (Morse and Keohane 2014; Zürn 2018). As we have seen in this chapter, questions of hegemony, hierarchy, and politicization are central to field theory, which focuses on how incumbents impose and justify their domination, meso-level social orders and hierarchies are created and challenged through social and symbolic interactions, and power is enmeshed in social practices and rules unique to each field. Empirically, a field theorist would probably conclude that most global fields are not sufficiently autonomous and powerful, and there is not enough structure among global fields to warrant talking about a global field of power today. But analytically, they could apply a rich conceptual and methodological tradition to explore this new research agenda.

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CHAPTER 5

ASSEMBLAGES

COLLEEN BELL AND CAROLINE HOLMQVIST

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the concept of "assemblage" and the central tenets of assemblage theory and assemblage thinking, all the while mindful of the concepts' relevance to the "meta-foundations of IPS [International Political Sociology]: relationalism, intersubjectivity, and historicism" (Goddard, Lawson, and Sending, this volume). To provide foliage to an otherwise abstract theoretical discussion, we choose to elucidate the concept of "assemblage" as it relates to the study of war. War thinking and war theorizing as such speaks to a central ambition on the part of the editors to examine the international as a social space. Indeed, it could be argued that in the social space that is "the international," no phenomenon has been more influential or consequential than the phenomenon of war. Put differently, doing IPS entails recognizing "social practices as productive of the core dynamics that drive world politics" (Goddard, Lawson and Sending, this volume), and we see war as precisely a conglomerate of social practices and war certainly amongst the core dynamics of world politics. We argue that assemblage theory and assemblage thinking is helpful in making sense of the (ever-shifting) "whole" of which the social relations that constitute war play a crucial part.

Paradoxically, the field ostensibly most concerned with the realm of the international, International Relations (IR), has not given the social relations of war the consideration they require. Rife with substantialist claims (about the state, system, civilization, internal, external, military, and so on), conventional IR sometimes appears to obscure more than it enlightens about war. This chapter makes the case for the study of war as fundamentally a social phenomenon, necessarily comprised of social discourses, practices, and materialities. We emphasize the relational essence of war and show how the study of any given "war" calls for the study of a broad field of relations in time and space (Barkawi 2012). We anchor the study of war to the field of IPS and, as such, also affirm (and advance) the significance of IPS to IR as a whole.

The chapter begins by outlining the concept of assemblage as an analytical tool to study ontologically diverse agents, artifacts, and narratives. Key tenets of assemblage thinking, irrespective of field, are identified. Following this, we discuss the under-theorization of war in IR, while advancing war as a social and relational practice. We

move thereafter to tracing the assemblage lineage in war theorizing and ask what the frustrations and shortcomings of war assemblage thinking have been. In the final part of the chapter, we take assemblage thinking forward, examining its political potential, both as a means of critique and as a tool for progressive, decolonial, and future-oriented thinking.

Assemblage theory and thinking

In the early twentieth century, the concept of assemblages emerged in artistic practice to disrupt expectations of what art "is," often by creating art from scavenged materials and found objects and configuring items in ways that "don't belong." Demonstrating a rejection of the commercialization of the art industry, artistic assemblages represented a new freedom in thinking and expression and, in their composition, transformed the meaning and significance of both objects and ideas, as well as their interconnections. With their wild and unruly power, assemblages traveled beyond artistic practice to inform epistemological and ontological debates in the social science and humanities on how to study the social world and what comprises its constitutive components. While positivism overtook most of the social sciences throughout the rest of the twentieth century and beyond, assemblage thinking has held on to a sharp corner of intellectual thought committed to investigating the infinite complexity, nonlinearity, and connectivity of all that comprises the social world and resisting prevailing conceits that it is ours to "know" and control.

Genuinely transversal, assemblage(s) has appeared as a concept, theory, and mode of thinking in fields from anthropology (Ong and Collier 2005; Li 2007) to science and technology studies (De Landa 2016). All variants of assemblage theory and thinking involve a deepening and focusing of relational thought and promise a more precise, microgranular rendering of social phenomena. According to Michele Acuto and Simon Curtis (2014), relational thought has struggled to keep apace with the rapid social change that has characterized recent decades (2014: 2). Amid a revival of materialist thinking, assemblage thinking has come into its own as a body of theory that rejects anthropocentrism and accounts for hybrids of material, biological, social, and technological components amidst the turbulence of the social world (Acuto and Curtis 2014).

In assemblage thinking broadly, the social world is understood as a patchwork of heterogenous and fluid configurations that, in turn, form part of other configurations. The social world is thus not a stable ontology of entities that proceed in a linear fashion from simple to more complex, small to big, and so forth. On the contrary, assemblage thinking requires that we accept that the social has indeterminate properties that are unstable and indefinite. Admittedly, giving up an approach to entities as discrete things that are composed of other things or which contribute to the composition of other things

in a progressive, stable, linear fashion leads to difficulties with explanatory intellectual pursuits. Yet, this conceptual approach is also more in line with our increasingly intimate appreciation for the complexity, relationality, and innovation that is continually discovered across both the natural and social worlds—to which assemblage thinking is particularly attuned.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987) offer the most authoritative conceptualization of assemblage as a grouping of heterogeneous elements that, at some point, display a kind of collective synergy and consistency. Thus, assemblage theorizing resonates with efforts to investigate the self-organizing and dynamic character of the global justice movement, involving a complex assemblage of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), anarchists, labor, and civil rights activists and professionals, all with multiple and mobile identities and, at times, antagonistic political critiques and modes of engagement, while nonetheless cohering around a shared desire for anti-capitalist future becomings (Stalker and Wood 2021). More recently, assemblage thinking has been employed to consider how Indigenous resistance and resurgence intersects with the radical Black tradition to forge a global assemblage of anti-imperialist radicalism, thus adding momentum to the Black Lives Matter and Idle No More movements and the unique histories and struggles that animate anti-colonial organizing across the world, including what can be forged together and how struggles take flight in new directions (Coulthard, Simpson, and Walcott 2018).

As demonstrated by the above examples, thinking in terms of assemblages offers an account of the social world and social formations as composed of complex and mutable configurations that are a part of other configurations. Yet, assemblages are not only inherently inventive but also ad-hoc groupings, meaning that the relations between elements in an assemblage may be subject to reorganization and transformation at any nodal point. Colin McFarlane (2011: 677) suggests that an assemblage is an ontology of constituent relations that are "composed, held together, but also transformed" by their interaction. In this arrangement there may be a partial disappearance of some elements and a notable invigoration of others. Assemblage theory, Graham Harman argues, is a theory of reality as "anti-atomistic" such that the world it conceives of is "devoid of privileged uncuttable units." Every "black box" can be opened "to reveal a swarm of interior components [and every] entity is already a society" (Harman 2014: 119).

Assemblages, argues Thomas Nail (2017), is more a theory of events, rather than of essence. There is no transcendent organizing principle to an assemblage; they are fundamentally self-organizing and indeterminate. Consequently, there is a kind of enduring slipperiness of assemblages, in which even when one is definable and seemingly coherent, it always exists among counter-forces that could undercut or exceed it. If we are seeking to know what something "is," we cannot, from the vantage of assemblage thinking, "presume that what we see is the final product or that this product is somehow independent of the network of social and historical processes to which it is connected" (Nail 2017: 24). Jane Bennett (2005: 2) characterizes assemblages as

having robust but nevertheless circumstantial and historical origins. So, too, is the topography of assemblages characteristically uneven. Some forces and actors may matter more than others, and no actor/actant lacks force. Politics, from this perspective, is grounded in an effective social ontology of "molar institutions, principles and social classes" as well as "molecular" elements of individuals and collective affect and desire. Changes in one of these can always be traced back to changes in the other, leading to a dynamic perspective on the capacities for agency and change in political life. There is no single commanding power that can entirely avoid being affected or changed by another component in the assemblage. As such, assemblage thinking comes with a "flat ontology" that holds open the potential for nonhierarchy in social relations.

Finally, technology, among other nonhuman elements, sits alongside human actors in assemblages. Hence, taking the idea of assemblage seriously means considering the possibility of agency also among nonhuman components. As the so-called "inanimate" character of nonhuman entities has come under intellectual scrutiny, assemblage thinking has opened up space to think about the material agency of objects, engineered devices, and forces of nature. Within assemblage thinking there are no fixed entities or attributes; instead, transactions are taken to be constitutive.

There is debate as to the critical potential of assemblage theory, from both theoretical and methodological perspectives (Collier 2014; Chandler 2014). We will return to the discussion of critical purchase of assemblage thinking later on in the chapter, but briefly outline the main points here. From a theoretical vantage point, the focus on the vitality of life in much assemblage thinking arguably displaces repression, ideology, inequality, and power as core concerns of critical theory. As David Chandler (2014: 100) argues, "the politics of assemblages is not concerned with power and structures, organizational strategy or with theoretical clarification but with asserting an alternative virtual ontology of creativity and resistance based on the fragility of objects and meaning rather than their fixity." In focusing on possible futures of virtual multiplicity and processes, assemblage thinking, in this view, loses sight of the critique of actually existing power thus failing to challenge it. Citing the work of Connolly (2011), Bennett (2010), Cudworth and Hobden (2011), Coole and Frost (2010), and Latour (2005), Chandler argues that the onto-politics of assemblage displaces critical sociology with "the pragmatic and empirical work of the 'sociology of critique', 'actor networks' and 'new materialisms,' " none of which challenge constituted power (Chandler 2014: 102).

A concern for ethics in the metaphysical, universalist sense is also difficult to reconcile with assemblage theory. However, assemblage theory does open up space for more situated ethics. Specifically, the anti-universalism posited by Deleuze through his conceptualization of assemblages provides an alternative perspective on moral subjectivity grounded in radical relationalism, which emphasizes the "situated nature of all entities" (Braidotti 2021: 174). Beings and entities are not autonomous units but are always interconnected and mutually affected. In this respect, ethics is fundamentally tied to the forging of sustainable and inclusive relations with others and doing so based on

affirmation of the "Other" through joint processes of subjectification (Dosse 2021: 126).

From a methodological point of view, Collier (2014) cautions that many contributors to assemblage theory take the complexity of life as both the premise and the finding of assemblage analysis. Indeed, "tracing how associations are assembled in order to show how associations are assembled" is not a contribution to social, let alone, critical analysis, Collier infers (2014: 36). In order for assemblage thinking to have critical purchase, it must be utilized as a conceptual tool through which to *redescribe* or expose aspects of our reality in a way that allows us to better discern how power functions and what is at stake, ethically and politically, in formal and informal institutional arrangements and processes. These critiques are important in pushing scholars to reflect on the challenge of critical theorizing to "think in conjunction with our research topics rather than only seek to 'explain' or 'understand' them" (Lisle 2014: 70).

Any attempt at distilling assemblage theory or assemblage thinking risks being unsatisfactory, such are its ephemeral qualities. Nonetheless, if we were to point to one core, it would center on assemblage theorists' claims regarding materiality. The rejection of a material/discursive divide is at the heart of assemblage thinking, and several important points flow from this. Taking seriously the agentic capacities of inanimate objects—such as the electricity grid, food, trash, and others—allows for what Jane Bennett calls an "enchanted materialism" or reckoning with "lively matter" (Coole and Frost 2010: 9). Such an ontology constitutes a rallying cry for assemblage theorists and lays the "foundation" (although anti-foundationalist!) for process-oriented thinking. Finally, critical materialist claims are pivotal to understanding co-constitution, where animate and non-animate agents are involved in what Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (2010: 10) evocatively call "choreographies of becoming." Indeed, the constitutive nature of assemblage allows us to appreciate the connectivity between processes and entities even when they are spatially and temporally dispersed.

With this overview of the main tenets of assemblage theory as a backdrop, the next section examines the use to which assemblage thinking has been put when it comes to the study of war. We find that the contours of a field of "war assemblage(s)" has indeed emerged in recent years and that this field holds significant promise for future studies of war relations, as well as (in keeping with the aims of the editors to this volume) for studying the international as a social space.

War in/as international social space

Conventional approaches to IR—realism, liberalism, and (early) constructivism—all undervalue and deprioritize the study of war. For realists, international order is perpetually haunted by the specter of war, given its underlying anarchical structure; yet, war as such is bracketed off from study. Realists conceive war as an indication of a

breakdown of the international system's brittle balance of power; the consequence of the ascendancy of one power at the expense of another and the upset of power relations —an upset that always, inevitably, contains the seeds of armed conflict (Mearsheimer 2001). Liberals may take issue with the realists about the remedy of this breakdown, but they share the assumption that war is, and ought to be, studied as the breakdown of an otherwise (at least potentially) peaceable international realm. Early constructivists (Wendt 1995) emphasize the way in which actors (states) partake in the creation of the system at all times; though the phenomenon of war itself remains sidelined (bracketed off) from analysis.

Most auspiciously, perhaps, the field of strategic studies, the stuff of war colleges around the world, often neglects the study of war as the social practice it is. Carl von Clausewitz, often taken as the "founding father" of strategic studies, is often given a very limited reading, circled around the much-cited description of war "as the continuation of politics by other means" (Clausewitz 2008). Such readings omit, or gloss over, Clausewitz's phenomenological account of war as a generative force (more on this in sections to follow), instead reducing the study of war to the study of an instrumental pursuit of political aims. Fraught with rationalist assumptions, such accounts amount to nothing short of a "strategic appropriation" of Clausewitz's work (Barkawi and Brighton 2011: 129), a distortion that has unhelpfully overshadowed Clausewitz's more important legacy as a phenomenologist of war.

Barkawi and Brighton's (2011) seminal piece "Powers of War: Fighting, Knowledge and Critique," published in *International Political Sociology* for the first time outlined this collective failure to adequately study war. Common to the elisions of war in fields outlined above is the failure to address war as a social practice. Examining the interrelationship between embedding war in social and political life and querying the role that war plays in shaping social and political orders is integral to exploring the international as a social space (Goddard, Lawson, and Sending, this volume). In short, the complex lifeworld of war must itself be a site of examination. Thus, recognition that war is relational is the necessary starting point for this analysis. Indeed, the antecedents of this thinking can be seen in early sociological accounts of war (Tilly 1985) such as "war made the state, and the state made war." Certainly, Foucault's account of "politics as the continuation of *war* by other means" has been a spring board for the analysis of war's social relations (Foucault 2003; Bell 2011; Chandler and Reid 2016).

Studies of war along these lines speaks to the hopes of the *International Political Sociology* editors in their opening call for the study of the "international," "political," and "sociological," yet, somewhat surprisingly the literature on the social relations of war has not referred to "IPS" as often as one might have expected, or such references have been overlooked (Bigo and Walker 2007). Notably, the *Routledge Handbook of International Political Sociology* only references "war" twice in the index, much less providing a stand-alone chapter on the topic (although it does have thematic chapters on citizenship, finance, governance, health, mobility, and mobilization) (Guillaume and Bil

gin 2017). And yet, work on war as a social practice, replete with social relations and embedded within a larger relationalist schema (Go and Nexon, this volume) has proliferated in recent years. The section below outlines some of the themes within this literature, paving the way for a deepening concentration of relational thinking on war. One promising avenue of relational thinking on war centers on assemblage theory and assemblage thinking.

As demonstrated in some of our own work, the interrelationship between war and policing offers a productive entry point into the social relations of war. Drawing attention to the ways in which war is always already intertwined with a social practice conventionally understood as "Other" to war, scholars of "war power, police power" (Neocleous 2011, 2014) or "policing war" (Holmqvist 2013, 2014) have explored the embeddedness of war-police within the social fabrication of order, capital accumulation, and state power (Bachmann, Bell, and Holmqvist 2015; Bell 2013; Neocleous 2011, 2014). In a different but related vein, war relations are integral to legal and ethical relations, or rather to the institutions, discourses, and practices of ethics and law (Gregory 2015; Kinsella 2005; Zehfuss 2018; Orford 2013). Furthermore, the study of war in relation to "local" social practices shows how the relationship between war and the social can, in fact, never be separated along local–global lines. While ostensibly "local," war relations always reverberate in the social space that is the "international" or global. In this way, the study of war and the city/urban life testifies to war's mobility (Brown 2010; Coward 2008); studies of war and the household (*oikos*) point to the ways in which "social" questions have fed into distinct tactics of warfare (Owens 2015; Bell 2018; Khalili 2011). Moreover, war as a relational practice has been studied from the point of view of the relationship between war and ecology (Grove 2019); between war and science/scientific regimes (Bousquet 2009, 2018); and between war and gender (Kinsella 2005, 2019). Debbie Lisle's (2016) work on war and tourism investigates the manifold local practices operating across global power/war relations. In sum, the study of the social relations of war takes us to unexpected places: from neuroscience (Howell 2017) to olfaction (McSorley 2020) and menstruation (Wilcox 2014), from algorithms (Amoore 2009) to soup (Enloe 2005).

From studying this lively field, we gather that studying war as a social practice, in relation to other social practices, is such that these practices cannot, in fact, be considered to be "Other" from one another. Bracketing off "secondary phenomenon" from "war," as is sometimes suggested, is unhelpful (Öberg 2019); rather, social practices are co-constituted and "Other" social relations are *productive* of war relations. Studying war as a fundamentally relational phenomenon demands an openness to an abundance of practices, discourses, and materialities. One of the ways in which this recognition has materialized is with respect to studies on war as endless in time and space (Duffield 2007; Filkins 2008; Gregory 2011b; Keen 2006), making the analysis of war more acute as well as more complex. Contemporary situations of coercive encounters are said to be distant, occurring in fragile and vulnerable places but—due to

the circulation of capital, technology, and normative claims—also very close (Gregory 2011a, 2011b). Exploring the relational processes of a global battlespace where war is "omnipresent" (Massumi 2015) demands a deepened focus on relationality and new modes/platforms for political interpretation. This is where assemblage thinking comes in.

War assemblage(s)

Some treat "assemblage(s)" as an ontological position, some as a methodological tactic for use in a research program, and others as a looser theoretical concept that we may use to think *with* rather than through (Lisle 2014, 2016). For Acuto and Curtis (2014: 18), a global assemblage(s) is "a space of enquiry, a way to frame analysis"; more loosely, Abrahamsen and Williams (2009) use "assemblage ideas" to trace configurations of war and security. There is a kind of enduring slipperiness of assemblages that allows for the concept to be inserted with relational thought in creative ways, one that chimes with the interest in war as a social phenomenon, always, already seeping out into the consciousness of people and things.

This creativity first concerns the type of criticality we have come to associate with explorations of war assemblage(s); second, the new life that assemblage theory has breathed into materialist thinking, especially as relates to technology and war; and third, the focus on emergent capacities in and of war via assemblage thinking (Bachmann, Bell, and Holmqvist 2015). To begin, assemblage thinking has been used as a heuristic device to explore and uncover the manifold actant/discursive constellations that animate contemporary war/security "governance." One illustrative example is Demmers and Gould's (2018) analysis of the "liquid" battlescape of warfare in the hunt for Joseph Kony in Uganda. This operation involved a merging array of social and material formations of security governance and cooperation, involving heterogeneous elements such as the US military, the International Criminal Court, and the Ugandan government (Demmers and Gould 2018; De Goede and Simon 2013). Assemblage thinking in this case opens up for exploring the way in which contemporary interventionism no longer centers on the direct control of territory or populations, but rather focuses on "shaping the international security environment through remote technology, flexible operations and M2M partnerships" (Demmers and Gould 2018: 366). The concept of "disassembly" organizes the tracing of previously "national" elements as they are undone and plugged into new transnational arrangements (under rubrics such as "security cooperation" and "building partner capacity") and mobilized alongside extra-state and private-sector activities that may maintain but also reconceive "national" governance (Demmers and Gould 2018: 368).

The critical purchase of tracing these lines of power goes beyond exposing the dynamic complexity of these assemblages; this is already a premise of conducting

assemblage thinking to begin with. Rather, tracking the assemblages of norms, strategies, and actors and their overlapping and mutating regimes of governance and force conducts the difficult but imperative task of tracing lines of responsibility and the harm done by these missions (Sassen 2014). In particular, tracing war assemblages shows us how expert actions (such as the issuing of arrest warrants, crisis tracking, and "rescue") contribute to and legitimize violence and how knowledge practices focused on vilification of "enemies" can facilitate coercive operations that shore up not only mandated but also seemingly unrelated economic and military goals that serve nothing but the interests of political and economic elites. In other words, the critical pay-off of investigating war assemblages is to expose and account for the real-word effects of these connections and the peril of taking them at face value.

Second, assemblage thinking has come into its own as a body of theory that rejects anthropocentrism and accounts for hybrids of material, biological, social, and technological components amidst rapid social change; all of which have significant bearing on the study of war. Antoine Bousquet (2014: 93) invokes assemblage thinking explicitly as a way of moving beyond the "twin pitfalls of technological determinism and social constructivism." IR scholarship is reproached for treating technology as separate from the social realm in general and social relations in particular—a simplification that assemblage theory effectively tackles by insisting on the interaction between human and nonhuman, animate and inanimate. Moreover, we can deduce here the co-functioning of different assemblages as objects transition from one assemblage structure to another, thereby altering their social and political meaning—such as when the airplanes smashed into the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, exiting the transport assemblage of which it was part and emerging as a new war assemblage (also illustrating the inherent movement and temporariness of assemblages as such).

Similarly concerned with the way in which military technologies are integrated within wider social forces that enable or disable their use, Stefan Borg (2021) draws on a particular strand of assemblage theory to illustrate how unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) change Israeli warfare. Borg mobilizes Bruno Latour's actor network theory (ANT) to provide an account that is "simultaneously historical, technological and holistic" (2021: 404). Focusing on the tactical use of drones for what he calls "loitering surveillance," Borg is able to trace the strategic effect of drones: radically enhancing the field of perception, UAVs have enabled a "slower" warfare, where casualties are stretched out over (rather than concentrated in) time, allowing more effective control of the "battle rhythm" (2021: 413). Here, we see how assemblage thinking in the form of ANT departs from a call to identify "the builders" of the Israeli UAV actor network, be they human or not, allowing Borg to situate analysis of drone warfare within a wider socio-technological context.

Likewise, Holmqvist (2013) interrogates the human–material assemblage of war—though with a view to the ethical stakes involved. Questioning the intuitive and oft-repeated claim that robotics "take the human experience out of war," Holmqvist sets out

to investigate the human–material assemblage as a complex whole, taking both bodies of flesh and bodies of steel into account. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's critical phenomenology (little used in IR) is invoked to establish a perspective on matter/materialism that is attentive to questions of consciousness and meaning-making; by attending to the way in which human experience is altered via technologies of automation and robotics, Holmqvist seeks to retrieve an ethico-political account of war assemblages by embracing, not shying away from, technological change and technology per se.

Finally, assemblage thinking, whether in Latourian or Deleuzian incarnation, draws attention to emergence (beginnings and expansion, in Borg's terms). In a rallying call for the study of war in terms of "becoming" rather than "being," Bousquet and colleagues (2020) also convey an assemblage way of studying war. For them, there is little point in trying to establish an ontological core to war (along the lines suggested by Barkawi and Brighton 2011, discussed previously); instead, they advance an understanding of war—as well as a research program—that allows for emergence—or becomings—to take center stage. Bousquet and colleagues argue that "the resolute elusiveness of a definite understanding of war is inherent in that very object … war undoes every attempt to conceptually shackle it through its creative advances across new modes, intensities and spaces. If war has an ontology, it must be coterminous with its consistent mutability" (2020: 100). Whether from the point of view of "being" or "becoming," conceiving of war as a complex whole (a war assemblage) sheds light on the simultaneously destructive and generative impact of war. In short, seeing war as a form of "undoing" opens up for a specific type of inquiry, where nodes and relations are prioritized over substantialist entities (Holmqvist 2013; Gupta 2023).

Post-colonial thought: The political potential of assemblage thinking

An important question that has accompanied the analysis of assemblages is its relation to normative and critical political theory. For some, Deleuze's work provides a gateway to alternative thinking within the Western tradition, a "potentially non-imperial conceptualization of sociability, motivation and self-comportment" that can contribute to a post-colonial ethics of community (Bignall and Patton 2010). Deleuze and Guattari's approach advances not only an implicit rejection of Eurocentric ways of being but also Western political theory's utter capture within statist conceptions of political sociology (Robinson and Tormey 2010). Nonetheless, the contributions of Deleuzian thought to post-colonial theory has been a site of contention, in particular due to the scathing criticisms of Gayatri Spivak. In her famous essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak," Spivak (1988) charged Deleuze (and Foucault) with Eurocentrism and for committing epistemic violence by failing to account for colonial and imperial conceptions of the "Other" and

ultimately abstracting the "Other" through "nomadism" and other ideas (Spivak 1988; also see Hallward 1997; Miller 2003). Deleuze, it is alleged, erects a "local–global" logic that marks (Southern) "Others" as local and subordinate in relation to a transcendental "unmarked" (European–global) self (Robinson and Tormey 2010: 21). Critiques by Spivak and others, however, have not gone uncontested by scholars, who continue to see value and promise in assemblage thinking for post-colonial theory specifically (Vivieros de Castro 1998; Bignall and Patton 2010; Braidotti 2021; Mbembe 2021; Appadurai 2019). Although it is the case that much post-colonial thinking has tended to adhere to frameworks of political representation and the critique of ideology, whilst Deleuzian philosophy operates within a "framework of virtual becoming and actual being," Deleuzian concepts have been productively invoked to develop critiques of colonial practice and to advance decolonial critique (Bignall and Patton 2010).

In particular, questions abound about the political impetus of assemblage thinking to theorize activism, social movements, autonomy and self-organizing, and emancipation (Acuto and Curtis 2014: 13; Stalker and Wood 2021). What are the implications of assemblage thinking for social-political analysis? Does thinking in terms of assemblage level the playing field for more egalitarian political stances? Does it help to advocate against established socio-political hierarchies and economic injustice as well as it might do with macro-categories and established notions? (Acuto and Curtis 2014: 13). Indeed, Deleuze commented that the suffering and destitution of so many people, whilst others lived in affluence and care, needed to be solved through the "making of world-wide assemblages" (Patton 2018), but given that he did not provide details on what these assemblages might look like, or their specifically transformative potential, his political vision was less than transparent. And yet, one must consider whether this vagueness is a recognition that one cannot know, abstractly and in advance, what progressive assemblages ought to be independently of their becoming and being in reality.

In other words, can assemblage thinking pursue nuanced and granular analysis whilst maintaining politico-ethical recognition of and attachments to structural critiques of imperialism, racism, capitalism, and war? We think so. We suggest that not only has assemblage thinking begun to shape the study of war in important ways, but also some of the most exceptional work in assemblage thinking has been taken up productively in post-colonial and decolonial studies of war. Here, assemblage thinking is deployed as a heuristic device to aid in the analysis of how violent regimes are made, legitimated, and work. We argue that assemblage thinking and post-colonial/decolonial approaches intersect around three premises: anti-universalism, anti-humanism, and co-constitution. By way of illustration, we discuss each of these intersections in relation to the work of one international studies theorist, with some references to complementary research. In discussing these works, we are not suggesting that assemblage thinking is the pre-eminent theoretical device used in all of these studies, but rather that assemblage

thinking characterizes a style of inquiry employed alongside diverse critical resources for post-colonial theorizations of war.

Radical relationalism and the potential for nonviolence

Assemblage thinking and post-colonialism share an ontological and epistemological critique of liberal universalism. Deleuzean thought is part of a wider post-structural orientation, which shares with much post-colonial work a drive to map the world in terms of the relationship between power and knowledge and seeks to reveal relations of power through the investigation of knowledge practices and their impact on those who are excluded from or objectified by these practices (Said 1978; Walker 1993). Investigations along these lines end up revealing the situatedness of knowledge, leading to an ontological and epistemological divorce with universalism as such claims are, over and over, revealed to be fundamentally particular and power laden. Further, liberal politics, it is argued, contains built-in "exceptions" in which rights, representation, recognition, and life itself can be bracketed off through the designations of specific peoples or issues as "security threats" or in circumstances deemed to be "emergencies." These exceptions, moreover, are not merely exclusions but facilitate liberal justifications for violence based on presumed failures or the absence of liberal economy, political organization, culture, and subjectivity (Mehta 1999; Jahn 2007a, 2007b).

Assemblage thinking, in contrast to a lot of work in Foucauldian security studies, which has been argued to whitewash colonial and racial violence (Howell and Richter-Montpetit 2019), can overcome the tendency of such work to center Western agency in accounts of war and intervention. As Meera Sabaratnam (2017: 27) argues, even the most progressive accounts of intervention routinely depict "a lack of political subjecthood" of those targeted in interventions. In providing the analytical tools by which to decenter the Western subject, assemblage thinking can shine a light on the erased stories and experiences propagated by dominant narratives and frameworks. Beginning with an ontology of assemblage displaces binaries of subject/object, self/other, and inside/outside and thus challenges the emancipatory presumptions of liberal representation and power.

Laleh Khalili's (2012) *Time in the Shadows* does exactly this by highlighting liberal regimes of state violence with a specific focus on the two-sided strategy of counter-insurgency: the population-centered "hearts-and-minds" approach and the kinetic approach to punitive detention and violence. As she shows, the tactics of violence, including mass slaughter to torture and incarceration, are the "conditions of possibility of a politics of the metropolis" (Khalili 2012: 7). This is to say that the mass politics of inclusive liberal universalism includes targeted exclusion, violence, and repression. To editorialize Clausewitz, war is the continuation of (liberal) politics by other means. Building on Jacque Rancière's (2001) theorization of police as opposition to politics

and "a partition between what is visible and what is not, of what can be heard from the inaudible," Khalili's (2015) analysis of proxy detention reveals the assemblage of actors and practices that make targeted subjects invisible to public and political accountability. Here, the police is understood to constitute the assemblage of institutions, legal instruments, military procedures, and hegemonies, as well as host and client actors and a range of carceral practices, that produce the invisibility and disappearance of subjects. This is because it is the police that decide what is made "sensible (or recognizable) to the polity or is hidden from it" (Khalili 2015: 94). As she writes, "If a detainee cannot be found, seen, heard, known or legally represented, then that detainee simply cannot exist." Security actors, logics, institutions, and discourses are broadly assembled to effectively replace politics by the police. These assemblages are built on a foundation of ideological gendered, homophobic, racializing categories in which client citizens and detainees are depicted as "weak," "feminine," culturally inferior, and intractably backward, bolstering civilizational hierarchies. Thus, as Khalili shows, assemblage thinking exposes the denial of rights, representation, and indeed, visibility of those subject to liberal counter-insurgency techniques through layers of legal, military, and carceral practices. Rather than freeing a universal "mankind" from the chains of repression, liberal political subjectivity is revealed to facilitate the repressive legal, carceral, and military politics of counter-insurgency.

Post-humanism: Racism, homo-nationalism, and disability

Some recent works on war explore the political, technological, and social assemblages that make up a "post-human" war by calling into question the gendered, racialized, embodied, and colonial assumptions that can no longer be taken for granted in what war "is." In *Terrorist Assemblages*, Jasbir Puar (2007) explores the racial techniques that underpin the war on terror in relation to homo-nationalist politics. As she shows, Western liberal states justify, in part, their wars through a depiction of "Islamic terrorists" and some of the countries that are claimed to host them, as backward homophobes in contrast to the West's purportedly forward-thinking normative acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirited, intersex (LGBTQ2I) rights. Puar shows how pink-washing, in which gay rights are repositioned as markers of civilization, depends upon a complex assemblage of capitalism, militarism, racism, sexuality, and imperialism that reinscribe an oppressive politics of control.

In her subsequent volume, *The Right to Maim*, Puar (2017b) extends her assemblage thinking to address the intersecting politics of racism, homo-nationalism, and disability. Here, she deepens her exploration of pink-washing as a geopolitical strategy of the Israeli government, as well as the ways in which trans politics are positioned to render Israel the quintessential progressive Western ally in the Middle East. From the analysis of the intersection of debility, capacity, and disability, a critique of the ability–disability

binary emerges, which challenges humanist assumptions through an alternative framing of debility, capacity, and disability. Using this frame, Puar's analysis of the debilitation and biopolitics in Palestine exposes how racism, debility, and colonialism are assembled in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. Here, she undertakes an analysis of the assemblage of racial ontologies in the control of mobility (and time) in the checkpoint system in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. As Puar argues, "time is lived as fear" of never reaching one's destination and "distance is stretched and manipulated to create an entire population with mobility debilities" (2017a: 136). In the place of an abled–disabled binary, Puar provides a rich accounting of not only the precarity of capacities but also their mutability and transformations. The assemblage of debility, capacity, and disability shows how they "exist in a mutually reinforcing constellation … often overlapping or coexistent" (2017a: xv).

Co-constitution and the empire within

Finally, both assemblage thinking and post-colonialism share an ontology of co-constitution. In his theorization of assemblages, De Landa (quoted in Acuto and Curtis 2014: 8) argues that "larger wholes always emerge from the interaction of heterogeneous parts at a lower level of scale" and that the assemblage process

> takes place repeatedly at various scales, as larger entities emerge from arrays of smaller components: individual persons emerge from a range of sub-personal components, communities emerge from the interactions of individuals, institutions and networks emerge from the interactions of communities, cities emerge from these networks and institutions, and states emerge from networks of cities as well as other networks and institutions.

One can extend this formula to empires, which emerge from the interactions between states, nations, and peoples, not only within the imperial metropole but also in colonial peripheries. Importantly, assemblages are not unidirectional, but rather each formation alters the composition of all that it touches and vice versa. Thus, assemblage thinking has been forged in analyses of co-constitution to map the cross-fertilization of techniques and practices between places, peoples, and practices and between colonies and metropoles. As Deleuze made clear, the only unit of any assemblage is that of "co-functioning."

Co-constitution thus holds that components of the global system, be they militaries, financial systems, or international legal regimes, were not developed discretely in one part of the world and then extended beyond. Rather, these regimes of control were co-constituted with those they sought to manage or repress. The prevalent attitude in IR, by contrast, has been that there is a spatial separation between the domestic and the international, thus leading to assumptions that practices emerge in domestic internal contexts and, only then, have the capacity to disseminate outwards. This understanding has structured the ways in which colonialism, war, and intervention have been understood and studied (Barkawi 2016; Sabaratnam 2017). In these formulations, there

is a hyper agency afforded to Western actors, norms, and agencies who are viewed as authors and movers of the international system and its constitutive components, while a concomitant passivity or, at best, localized agency is applied to Southern counterparts (Pingeot and Bell 2022). This is not to suggest that all parties exercise equal power but rather to recognize that the West is not the "self-made" mover of history as it is so often presented to be (Hobson 2013).

In *Empire Within,* Alexander Barder (2015) draws on assemblage thinking to expose the co-constitution of imperial knowledges, norms, and practices. The connections between metropole, periphery, domestic, and international are much deeper and more profound than mainstream theories of IR have acknowledged. Writes Barder, "They involve horizontal as well as vertical diffusion of norms and practices of material assemblages that connect hierarchical relations between periphery and metropole" that reverberate across imperial networks, configuring imperial zones as laboratories for testing new disciplinary dispositifs to control populations (2015: 103). Reverberation, conceptually related to Latour's notion of "actant," characterizes an "entity that modifies another entity" (2015: 139). The colonial laboratory is not simply a site in which Western agents act upon a supposedly passive colonial space, but rather the colonial laboratory is "one in which a multiplicity of actants operate to create new objects or knowledge or novel technologies that become part of a *dispositifs* of governance" (2015: 40).

Barder's work challenges the Eurocentrism of most IR theories, which demonstrate a "big-bang" theory of Western modernity (Hobson 2013) in which modernity is claimed to have emerged in Europe endogenously before spreading outwards. This misses how the West is "in so many ways, shaped and reshaped through its interactions with the non-Western world" (Hobson and Sajed 2017: 551) and the "reverse impacts of norms and practices that emerge within the historical crucibles of Western empire" (Barder 2015: 4). This is not simply a historical matter, however, but relates to the Global War on Terror as a moment of neo-imperial experimentation, including "the horizontal as well as vertical diffusion of norms and practices of material assemblages that connect hierarchical relations between periphery and metropole" (2015: 130).

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to navigate the intersections of IPS, relationalism, assemblage theory, and war. Contemporary modes of war have been placed at the center of the discussion, which has moved back and forth between the overarching aims of IPS, to the meta-commitment of relationalism, and the various iterations of assemblage theory and assemblage thinking. Drawing on thinkers from Manuel De Landa and Bruno Latour to Giles Deleuze and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, we have showed that assemblage theory is

rich both in its intellectual origins and in terms of the cutting-edge critical theoretical work it has spawned.

There are, of course, objections to assemblage theory—and we have sought to tackle the different variants over the course of this chapter. We have noted Stephen Collier's (2014: 36) damaging take-down of assemblage thinking:

> Sometimes premises are taken as the result. A scholar posits a dynamic and fluid ontology and then continuously discovers contingency and fluidity, or keeps tracing how associations are assembled, or *that* they are assembled rather than pregiven, natural or self-evident facts of the world. … the methodological starting point is also the finding.

This is the great so-what question of assemblage thinking. If flat ontology/new materialism/destabilizing of entities or structures is the *starting point*, how can it also be the result? Clearly, assemblage theory needs to move beyond this to be effective.

We also ask what the limits of assemblage thinking on war may be. Does assemblage thinking in fact stand in the way of progressive politics, including as it relates to war? Is thinking war as creative immanence, complexity, adaptability, in fact antithetical to critiquing war? While it is important to think through the limits of assemblage thinking, it has undeniably contributed to decolonial analyses of war in its imperial and social dimensions, not least because decolonial theory is ideally placed to think through the unequal—indeed, targeted—distribution of vulnerabilities to death. It is the casting of some lives as ungrievable, which forms a core element of the (social) logic of war. As Butler (2009) argues, the conditions for how wars are waged is one path to forging opposition to them. We must ascertain how popular support or acquiescence to war is cultivated if we have any hope of challenging prevailing beliefs that war is an inevitability, or even a source of moral satisfaction. In other words, the possibility of nonviolence lies, in part, in our commitment to understanding the conditions for war's emergence, adaptation, and power. And assemblage thinking's process-oriented disposition is well suited to such considerations.

Thus, we have argued that that assemblage thinking does, in fact, have political potential, most promisingly perhaps in the intersection postcolonialism—posthumanism—assemblage thinking (Greyser 2012). Chandler (2014: 105) argues that the futuristic orientation of assemblage thinking is a weakness, arguing that "virtual life as immanent possibility rather than actuality is a life without human aspirations." However, for anti-colonial thinkers, futurism is a radical means through which to imagine new relations of power. Paraphrasing Fanon, Mbembe (2021) notes that "the decolonized community defines itself by its relation to the future—the experience of a new form of life and a new relation to humanity" (2021: 226). Rosi Braidotti (2021) takes a different view: "the double structure of the present"—the present is neither a point in time nor a static bloc but a continuous flow pointing in different directions at once. "I invite you accordingly to think of the posthuman present as both the record of *what we are ceasing to be* (the actual) and the seed of *what we are in the process of becoming* (the virtual)"

(2021: 257, emphasis in original). Assemblage theory and assemblage thinking takes us from this—the existential question of what it means to be human in the twenty-first century—to microgranular materialist readings of nodes, objects, and matter in and of war. As such, assemblage thinking constitutes a way of taking *matter* seriously, while also helping us trace the social relations of war wherever they take us.

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PART II

INTERSUBJECTIVITY

CHAPTER 6

INTERSUBJECTIVITY

CHARLOTTE EPSTEIN AND PATRICK THADDEUS JACKSON

INTRODUCTION

International Political Sociology (IPS) understands the *international* as indicating a space of political and social relations that overspill the nation-state: a world stage. That space is *political* in that it is underwritten by deeply unequal relations of power that are constantly being reproduced, and contested, by the actors interacting within it. It is *social* in that these actors share common bonds from which they arise as actors in the first place. While IPS has emerged at the conjunction of many different disciplines (from political science to geography via sociology),[1] the thread unifying the scholars involved in this emergence is that they were all concerned to explain phenomena that require taking into account the international as a level of analysis in its own right, encompassing phenomena that cannot be understood by considering exclusively what happens within states or nations. Against this multidisciplinary backdrop, and given this shared focus, the way IPS positioned itself in relation to the field that had long laid claim to the international, namely International Relations (IR), has been central to how it emerged as a distinct field of study.

'Intersubjectivity' describes the basic structure of the international understood as a social, as opposed to a physical, system. Etymologically, it means the space between ("inter") subjects, where they stand in relation to one another, and where they engage and encounter one another. 'The subject', in turn, is the founding term of philosophical modernity. It was first articulated by René Descartes, who, from a simple observation, "I think therefore I am," posited the subject as the starting point for all thought and action at the dawn of the modern age (Bernstein 1992). The concept thus appears to cast the focus at the level of the individual: the thinking, doubting, acting 'I'. Why, then, "intersubjective" rather than "inter-individual"? The answer to this question holds the key to understanding a distinctive contribution of IPS, and how IPS addresses certain shortcomings of a "mainstream" or US-centric IR.[2]

At the heart of IPS is a critique of the ways in which IR has missed the *relationality* of international affairs, the sociality of its own object of analysis. The gist of the critique is that, even when it claims to consider the international as a social system, much of IR has tended to fall back to envisaging its actors—whether states, firms,

international organizations, or nongovernmental organizations—as atomistic agents, on the model of the self-sufficient individual, who, the traditional story goes, makes decisions and acts quite independently from any external factors. Even when such actors are seen to be reacting to external factors, they are considered merely to be responding to these factors by maximizing their exogenously given interests. Actors' reactions are collapsed back to being autonomous actions, taking place in an external environment that is understood as exogenously fixed at the moment of action. This atomistic model is then scaled up to the broadest level of political analysis: the international system. The picture that emerges is one of a sequence of mechanistic actions and (re)actions, on the model of billiard balls colliding with one another, as Arnold Wolfers (1959) so memorably put it. The "inter," or relational sociality, is lost as a result. In the traditional IR picture, there is no presumption of any constitutive dependence between the actors—the self and the other are existentially independent of one another. The issue, then, is how to put to work a model of agency that is better attuned to the relationality, and thus the sociality, evinced by international affairs. This is what is at stake in the term "intersubjectivity", and in the shift from the language of "the individual" to that of "the subject" that it introduces.

In this chapter, to introduce the concept of intersubjectivity, we begin by revisiting IR from the perspective of IPS and its core concern with finding ways of appropriately rendering the intersubjective structure of international politics. We hold up these two figures of agency, 'the individual' on the one hand, and 'the subject' on the other, to show, first, how IR regularly misses sociality when the actor that it is holds in its sights is understood to be an archetypal atomistic individual; and second, how some parts of IR capture the thick dependence of intersubjectivity when they focus instead upon the subject. A focus on the individual insists that we develop models connecting a subjective inside to an objective outside, whether we are talking about individual people or individual states; the inside/outside boundary *itself* cannot be the focus of the analysis. By contrast, a focus on the subject makes no such demands and opens novel possibilities for analyzing social relations.

We then explore two different ways of apprehending intersubjectivity. The first, which is situated at the level of *inter*subjectivity proper and concerns the space between subjects, we approach via the paradigm of language, which is both an *example* of intersubjectivity and the *site* of intersubjectivity par excellence. We then open a second, *intra*-subjective level, by considering the subject at the core of intersubjectivity. This shows why, and how, the latter exemplifies the sociality of the international. How to find better models for rendering the social is a central question for IPS. Language affords one model. A descent "into" the subject affords another.

The shift from individuals to subjects also has a surprising benefit in that it allows us to recover the notion of "structure" from the structuralists in mainstream, US-centric IR. Dominant realist and liberal approaches in IR couple their individualism with a notion of structure that produces nothing but parametric constraints on individual action,

obscuring the generative potentials of social arrangements and patterns of transaction. Although this insight was at the heart of Alexander Wendt's (1987) classic indictment of mainstream, US-centric IR, the subsequent development of scholarly efforts to take the co-constitution of agents and structures seriously ended up missing the mark in some important ways. The reclaiming of social *structure* is part and parcel of the project of reclaiming the *social* (as in Jackson and Nexon 2019) along the very lines that IPS makes possible. That thread runs throughout our ensuing discussion.

The subject vs the individual: Mapping out existing approaches

Individualist IR

This first section considers US-centric IR traditions that conceive their actor on the model of the *individual*, as opposed to the *subject* that IPS discloses. To map out the differences among distinct streams of individualist IR, we begin with a distinction between 'objective' and 'subjective'.[3] This enables us to sort US-centric IR theories according to whether they consider the factors that account for how actors behave to be located in the external environment ('objective') or, instead, inside of the actors' heads ('subjective'). We further distinguish between those approaches that treat individual actors as exogenous to their social interactions and those approaches that allow for the possibility that social interactions can alter individuals in fundamental ways.[4] This gives us four varieties of IR theory that have the figure of 'the individual', instead of the subject, at their core (see Table 6.1).[5]

Table 6.1 Mapping of individualist IR theories

	Exogenous	Interactive
Priority to subjective	Ideational/psychological (belief)	Social constructivist (norms)
Priority to objective	Instrumentalist (calculation)	Materialist (hegemony)

In the next section, we will consider instead the intersubjective approaches: those that operate with a *subject* rather than an *individual*. Since those approaches do not start off with a theoretical division between an actor and its environment but, instead, allow that distinction to emerge in practice, they do not fit into the typology we have just sketched. Indeed, the very fact that individualist IR begins with the division between an individual and their environment prevents it from apprehending intersubjectivity in the first place. In order to appreciate this, we begin with individualist IR.

Traditionally, US-centric IR realism and liberalism, in virtually all of their variants and flavors,[6] belong to the "instrumentalist" box in the lower left-hand corner of the above chart. Factors outside of anyone's control impinge on actors, who respond to those situations by calculating the best course of action, given the information at their

disposal. State leaders confront a distribution of capabilities internationally and balance, or bandwagon, or ally, or conquer as their circumstances dictate—or they fail to do so, in which case they suffer the consequences (e.g. Schweller 1994; Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth 2007). States, firms, and publics look out at a world of constraints and opportunities and chart an optimal pathway balancing risks and rewards (e.g. Keohane 1984). Despite their differences, instrumentalist theories prioritize accurate depictions of the external environment the actors confront, and besides the gathering of correct information, the only role that such theories leave for actors lies in the calculation of costs and benefits. Because their calculations concern an external environment that is held to be objective, the actors can make their calculations correctly or incorrectly, and sometimes whether they have done so correctly or not is only apparent in hindsight, especially to scholarly analysts writing after the fact. Subjective factors typically only figure into instrumentalist accounts as sources of error or bias (Snyder 1991), misperception (Jervis 1976), and other obstacles to the correct calculation of a course of action. Or they may be absent entirely, with the account turning on the mind-independent interaction of market forces and other structural logics.[7]

Early critiques of instrumentalist approaches proceeded by arguing that actors on the international stage simply did not function like calculating machines but, instead, brought a variety of subjective beliefs and dispositions into their deliberations about how to act. In an early discussion of the ambiguities of "national security," Arnold Wolfers (1952: 485) pointed out that security encompassed both "an objective sense," which measured "the absence of threats to acquired values," and "a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked." As such, actors holding particular beliefs about the likelihood of an attack would act differently than actors in an identical objective situation who held different beliefs, and it would not be possible to explain what an actor did, or should do, by simply looking at their objective situation.[8] Political psychologists further investigated the causal role played by attitudes and beliefs (Kelman 1958, 1987), the way that heuristics and biases shaped the decisions that actors made (Kahneman, Slovic, and Tversky1982; Simon 1985), and more recently, how emotional states and evolutionary/neurobiological factors figure into actions and outcomes (McDermott 2004; Kertzer and Tingley 2018). All of these approaches emphasized the subjective, placing the locus of action firmly between the ears of the knowledgeable individual and adopting an inside-out approach to explanation—a clear contrast with the outside-in logic of instrumentalist approaches.

Criticisms of realism and liberalism by IR constructivists in the 1980s and 1990s further opened up the realm of the subjective within anglophone IR scholarship. Many of these critiques did so by incorporating, in a sometimes confusing way, the notion of the intersubjective, vacillating between treating "intersubjective" as shorthand for "the contents of many individual minds," and treating it as something autonomous from all individual minds but not as an objective, parametric structure. Alexander Wendt's pithy

formulation—"people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them" (Wendt 1992: 396–397)—displays the ambiguity nicely inasmuch as it is rather unclear whether this is a statement about individual people (each of whose individual minds contain meanings, which may be the same as the meanings contained in other individual minds) or about the relationship between meaning and action (in which action derives from meaning rather than from "objective" factors). The section of Wendt's often-cited 1992 article from which this quotation is drawn is called "Anarchy, self-help, and intersubjective knowledge," but as Wendt develops his argument, it becomes strikingly apparent that he cashes out intersubjective knowledge as "collective knowledge" into which actors are socialized and that socialization is what gives rules and norms their "motivational force" (1992: 399). This is a subjective factor. The realm of the intersubjective is thus important for Wendt primarily as a vehicle through which subjective beliefs can be shared with others, and only influences action in that specific way.

US-centric IR constructivists thus mounted a two-pronged critique of instrumentalist approaches. On one hand, they argued for the importance of ideas, principled beliefs, and other subjective factors; instead of merely serving as sources of distraction and error, such ideational commitments could explain why actors did what they did, sometimes in defiance of what they rationally *ought* to have done. In taking this path, some constructivists made common cause with political psychologists, who had been exploring this landscape for decades (e.g. Shannon and Kowert 2012). Other constructivists rejected the strict subject–object dichotomy of both instrumentalist and ideational/psychological approaches and instead looked to a social realm of meanings as the source of social action. Here, what matters are the interactions between actors and the meanings that they attribute to one another's actions. Explorations of the effects of international norms (Price 1995; Checkel 1997; Tannenwald 1999) took this second path, as did analyses of legitimacy (Hurd 1999) and identity (Klotz 1995) as factors in international affairs. Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink's elaboration of a "norms life cycle" (1998) sketched out a pattern for change in international affairs that depended on meaningful consensus in a way that neither instrumentalist nor ideational/psychological approaches did.

But despite this apparent opening to the intersubjective, norm-oriented constructivists retained a central focus on subjective factors, and this introduced a key ambiguity into their accounts. Mark Laffey and Jutta Weldes noted the issue early on, contrasting "an understanding of 'ideas' as symbolic and representational, because it rests on a conception of ideational phenomena as fundamentally *social and intersubjective*" with one that regarded such phenomena as "*collective or shared*" (Laffey and Weldes 1997: 209). The latter, a clear privileging of the subjective, transformed notions of meaning and purpose into ideational variables (as in Goldstein and Keohane 1993) and adopted a theory of action that once again put dynamics taking place inside the heads of individual actors front and center. The consequence of this move is that the

intersubjective is either minimized or vanishes altogether, and the emphasis shifts to the ways that actors, through their interactions with one another, acquire subjective dispositions that conform to one or another social standard: through socialization (Schimmelfennig 2000), argument and persuasion (Risse 2000; Crawford 2002), or progressive learning (Crawford 1991). If the way that intersubjective phenomena shape outcomes and arrangements is by passing through the heads of actors, then the autonomy of the intersubjective is reduced or eliminated, replaced instead by a plurality of subjects whose thoughts have been brought into close conformity.

The slippage from intersubjective back to subjective can be seen especially clearly in Emanuel Adler's programmatic 1997 article "Seizing the Middle Ground."[9] Adler seeks to position constructivism between a series of conceptual dichotomies, including material/ideational and rationalist/relativist, and also—key for our purposes here—subjective/objective. Adler defines constructivism as "the view that *the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world*" (Adler 1997: 322, emphasis in original) and further argues that interpretations are based on knowledge that "persists beyond the lives of individual social actors, embedded in social routines and practices as they are reproduced by interpreters who participate in their production and workings" (1997: 327). So far, so intersubjective; but then, Adler seeks to distance constructivism from "[c]onstitutive perspectives, mainly poststructuralism and postmodernism" by denying that "individual subjectivity is completely constituted by discourse structures" (1997: 333).

The word "structures" is key here, as it indicates how Adler has mapped subjective/objective onto another central dichotomy in social theory—the agent/structure distinction—and thus equated a decentering of subjectivity with a denial of agency. He draws on Margaret Archer, Karl Popper, and John Searle to cement the centrality of subjectivity in his account, arguing that a constructivist theory needs to reserve a place for thoughts in individual heads to make a difference; otherwise, individuals cease to matter in the account, and they cannot learn from past experience. This approach is thus explicitly individualist, and the subjectivity Adler seeks is exclusively located in the individuals' heads—much as it is for Searle and for Popper, on whom he draws most extensively. As such, when he claims that nowadays "arms control, sustainable development and universal human rights … are intersubjectively taken for granted" (1997: 340), it is difficult to see what this means other than an observation that many, if not all, of the people in the groups of practitioners and citizens to which he is referring have come to share particular beliefs. If all of the important mechanisms and processes involving knowledge and meaning pass back through individual minds, it becomes difficult to see the difference between social constructivist and ideational/psychological accounts. Intersubjectivity is lost once again.

Taking a completely different tack, materialist approaches open up the realm of the intersubjective by critiquing instrumentalist theories for their presumption that all of the

processing of the implications of objective factors takes place through individual calculations and reactions. Instead, materialists call attention to the *indeterminacy* of notions like "interest," but they look less to subjective ideas and more to the correspondence between the ideational and external-physical registers in order to explain the successes and failures of the different ways that actors make their way in the world. E. H. Carr's classic analysis of the dialectical opposition between "realist" and "utopian" (or "idealist") approaches to international affairs, far from being the one-sided defense of realism that it is often mistakenly taken to be, adopts just this line of thinking. Carr argues that the driving force of that dialectic is how well or poorly particular conceptions of international affairs line up with and integrate objective factors concerning the relative power of various countries (Carr 2001: 87):

> Having demolished the current utopia with the weapons of realism we still need to build a new utopia of our own which will one day fall to the same weapons. The human will continue to seek an escape from the logical consequences of realism in the vision of an international order which, as soon as it crystallizes itself to concrete political form, becomes tainted with self-interest and hypocrisy, and must once more be attacked with the instruments of realism.

Carr thus portrays the realm of international affairs as a continual disjuncture between objective conditions (which is also where the actors' "self-interest and hypocrisy" play out) and the "vision" that animates any existing international order—a vision which, drawing on Karl Mannheim (1936), Carr argues is nothing like a set of shared or aggregated beliefs. In interacting with one another, actors propel the dialectic between their collective utopian vision and their material circumstances: a shared vision prompts the creation of institutions, which then become players in the usual struggles for power and influence in the political realm, despite their retention of, and reference to, a more explicitly idealistic program. Critics seize on the resulting gap between vision and actuality and sometimes manage to undercut or disassemble the institutions as a result of delegitimating them—but then the cycle begins again as the critics erect their own substitute institutions in their place.

Later work on "hegemony" continues along these lines, incorporating notions from Antonio Gramsci in order to suggest that projects of world order and world ordering should be understood as attempts to knit together directed but indeterminate social forces in compelling ways (Cox 1996a; Bieler and Morton 2008). Robert Cox's oft-cited essay "Social Forces, States, and World Orders" (Cox 1996b) isolates the "fit" between ideology, institutions, and power as the driving force behind both the stability and the instability of successive arrangements of international affairs. That "fit," moreover, is produced *politically*, by organic intellectuals and other political actors. Because it is impossible, in Cox's account, to *independently* develop an account of objective conditions—theory, in his famous statement, is always for someone and for some purpose—the only way to determine whether a given arrangement successfully incorporates a variety of elements into a hegemonic project is to try to do so and see

how it plays out. Hegemonic projects are thus more than individual beliefs, and although their success and failure are ultimately tied to objective conditions, they are autonomous enough that treating them as more or less automatic emanations of external-physical factors would be a mistake.[10]

All of the approaches we have discussed thus far, for all their differences, place the *individual* instead of the *subject* at the center of their account of action. Instrumentalist and ideational/psychological approaches thus have little space for intersubjectivity; instrumentalist approaches reduce mind to calculation and root their explanations in objective factors correctly or incorrectly perceived, while ideational/psychological approaches confine the mind to the insides of particular heads and root their explanations in subjective mental phenomena such as beliefs. This gives us either individual actors who are more or less efficient throughputs for environmental inputs or individual actors who somehow acquire beliefs and heuristics all on their own: living statues, as Norbert Elias (1991) once put it, who seem only to engage with one another accidentally or instrumentally. Either way, they give us an individual rather than a subject. These approaches, without a space for intersubjectivity, have no central notion of the *social* in their accounts and grant no explanatory autonomy to the constitutive social involvements that actors have with one another (Jackson and Nexon 2019). "The actor" as emergent from social ties and transactions cannot be a feature of individualist accounts. And insofar as meaning is inherently public—as Wittgenstein (1958) argued, the very idea of a private language or of private meaning is internally contradictory, because using words meaningfully implies rules of grammar, and rules can't be subjective without thereby ceasing to be rules—it is unsurprising that approaches that don't acknowledge intersubjectivity either dismiss meaning altogether or tacitly rely on some unsustainable assumptions about individual cognition.[11]

IR constructivist and materialist approaches at least acknowledge the intersubjective and, as such, have a place in their accounts for meaning—public, comprehensible, shared—to play a role in producing outcomes. Social relations and interactions are important to the norm dynamics highlighted by IR constructivists and to the hegemonic projects interrogated by materialists, and those dynamics cannot be reduced entirely either to subjective beliefs or to objective conditions. But because neither of these approaches place intersubjectivity at the heart of their accounts, the social is constrained by something to which it is ultimately subordinated. 'The individual' always stands prior to the social, rather than being constituted by it. For social constructivists, norms and other publicly meaningful codes and conceptions only play a role by entering these individuals' heads, and what produces action is not a norm or a publicly meaningful notion but individual subjective belief in that notion or norm. Materialists, by contrast, subordinate the intersubjective dynamics of making a situation meaningful to objective conditions in the environment and setting, and projects succeed or fail based on how well they incorporate those conditions. As compared to

instrumentalist and psychological approaches, there is some room for the social and intersubjective in both of these latter approaches, but not much.

Intersubjectivity in international studies

So far, we have been concerned with mapping existing approaches in mainstream, US-centric IR that have the notion of 'the individual' at their core. We argued that individualist approaches can be grouped according to whether they consider the drivers of action to be 'objective', out there in the world, or 'subjective', lodged between the actor's (or the actors') ears. Either way, they fail to capture anything that happens in between these two poles and thus miss intersubjectivity. This subjective–objective binary, along with the figure of 'the individual' that underwrites it, yields a pre-social understanding of agency, where agency and sociality are held separate, and the former is closer to a physical force. The sociality of agency is foreclosed from the analysis as a result.

What is missing in individualistic approaches is the possibility of conceiving the international as a social system that, unlike physical systems, is constructed all the way down, by layers of past interactions that begat structures that, in turn, shape both the current subjects and how they interact, in a never-ending cycle of mutual constitution. Instrumentalists are most striking in treating the international system little differently than a physical system, where the actors' behavior is determined by the distribution of material capabilities (which are taken to be the system's structure). This is not unlike how a physical object's fall is determined by the laws of gravity. In fact, however, *all* the approaches that hold in their sights the stable, bounded individual as their image of an actor are intent on holding a world outside of, or prior to, the social relations within which the actor acquires its ability to act and the resources with which to act. Whether these are ideas and beliefs (subjective factors) or material capabilities (objective factors), and whether actors can influence one another through their interactions, the basic model of a pre-social individual persists.

There are, however, traditions and theories in international studies more broadly that accord more centrality and autonomy to the intersubjective and treat the dynamics of social relations as independently determinative of outcomes—and therefore as *productive* of the actors whose autonomy and existence is presumed by individualist IR. What these alternative approaches have in common is the notion of 'the subject', that is, an actor who is both constituted by the social structures within which it interacts with other actors and, in turn, shapes these structures. Although this kind of co-constitution was declared *in principle* in classic IR constructivist statements, in their applied analyses *in practice* IR constructivists stuck with exogenously given individuals that could, at the most, interact with one another and change one another's (subjective) minds (see Epstein 2011, 2013).

Being less attached to the figure of 'the individual', these other lines of inquiry in international studies had an easier time foregrounding the dynamics of how subjects are formed and sustained. Mobilizing Fredrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault, IR poststructuralists began by laying bare the illusions of sovereign autonomy that are invested in this figure and that it serves to hold in place (see e.g. Der Derian and Shapiro 1989; Ashley 1989; Walker 1993; Bartelson 1995). For their part, feminist theorists have long argued that we cannot begin the analysis of international affairs by presuming the existence of state actors but have to make states endogenous to those ongoing processes of inclusion and exclusion that produce the effect of stable state boundaries (Tickner 2014; Weber 1998). Cynthia Enloe reminds us that the boundaries between the international and the domestic build on and incorporate gendered distinctions between the public and private realms, distinctions that produce centers and peripheries both within states and between them (Enloe 1990, 1996). Laura Sjoberg and Caron Gentry (2007) trace the circulating gender codes that frame and make possible violence by and against women, directing our attention to gendered social and meaningful relations as an autonomous source of outcomes not to be reduced to beliefs in heads or environmental determinants (see also Lobasz 2008; Wilcox 2015). And Cynthia Weber (1995) demonstrates that the practice of intervention, rather than being an interaction between two pre-existing states, is better understood as a site at which *both* state actors are produced, not in the least by the deployment of gendered notions of activity and passivity.

Along these lines, theorists of discourse and practice privilege intersubjective dynamics in ways that highlight how the public processes of negotiating and contesting meaning generate outcomes without needing to pass through any subjective head or correspond to any objective condition, *because they are productive of both*. David Campbell's classic analysis of US foreign policy through discourses of danger and the mobilization of "the foreign" places the practice of demarcation itself in the foreground and thus highlights how the state is ongoingly produced (Campbell 1992; see also Walker 1993). "Copenhagen School" securitization theory looks not to beliefs or objective attributes to define security but, instead, calls attention to the politics of various moves that work to *make* something a security issue (Wæver 1995; Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998; Hansen 2006). Charlotte Epstein (2008) shows how the international politics of whaling was fundamentally reordered in the early 1980s, not by a change in the play of material interests but by a powerful new anti-whaling discourse that reconfigured a majority of states' interest in whales toward saving them rather than hunting them and transformed many of them from fierce whalers into whale-savers. Antje Wiener (2009, 2018) argues that in order to analyze international norms, we need to start with the position that norms are continually being contested and negotiated; they are not stable objects that can be either subjectively internalized or compared to objective conditions but are, instead, publicly meaningful resources that afford certain courses of action and not others (see also Kratochwil 2014). Practice theorists (Neumann and Sending 2010;

Adler-Nissen 2015; Pouliot 2016; Goetze 2017) highlight how the structured doings of actors give rise to positions of dominance and subordination and sometimes produce relatively stable configurations of authority that inform the next round of social interaction. And some theorists of international order adopt a similar focus on engagements between actors, examining the structured doings of *state* actors and their implications for broader patterns of order (Musgrave and Nexon 2018; Nexon and Neumann 2018).

We might call these approaches to discourses and practices *relational constructionist*, because of the importance played in these lines of inquiry by *relations*: ties and processes that take place between actors and, as such, form the raw social material out of which action arises. The theory of action on display throughout all of these relational accounts is what we might call creative action, in the sense elaborated by Hans Joas (1997), who builds on a broadly pragmatist conception of action (Hellmann 2009). The basic notion is that action does not arise from a fully formed pre-existing entity—an 'individual'—which reacts to information and other stimuli on the basis of pre-existing beliefs, or interests, or procedures of calculation. Instead, actors find themselves in problem-situations, which are defined as part of their ongoing efforts to make their way in the world, and the process of defining and addressing problem-situations is simultaneously a process of defining and shoring up the actor itself (as in Dewey 1910). Creative action is not "owned" by a pre-social actor (an individual) but is, instead, an "unowned" process that is productive of actors and actions alike.[12] The actors do not precede or stand apart from the process; they emerge from it. Consequently, subjects—not 'individuals'—lie at the heart of this approach: the subject is *constitutively* enmeshed in social relations and cannot be a priori extracted from them.[13]

In a similar way, the English School's notion of "international society" begins with social and meaningful relations rather than with putatively autonomous state actors. States, in engaging with one another, evince a set of shared understandings concerning what it means to be a state and how to act toward each other. Thus, even in the international political system defined by conditions of anarchy,[14] its actors share an essentially relational connection. This has nothing to do with whether those actors are able to cooperate on collective problems of international politics, such as climate change. In fact, they may be at war; nevertheless, a common set of diplomatic practices persist, as exemplified by the declaration of war and by the notion of *jus in bello*. The fundamental commonality of international society manifests in what are known as the institutions of international politics, such as diplomacy, the balance of power, and even war itself (Bull 1977; Bull and Watson 1984; Dunne 1998).[15] Far from being an exogenous structure constraining pre-existing individual states, the elements of international society are, instead, the shared materials out of which state action—and the state as the subject engaging in that action—arises.

Two approaches to intersubjectivity: The inter-subjective and the intra-subjective

We have argued that what these alternative approaches have in common is a rejection of the notion of the pre-social individual, even if they do not all use that language. IPS as an approach to international studies builds on and incorporates these threads, explicitly placing the *subject* rather than the *individual* at the core of its conception of the social. As we said above, a focus on 'the individual' pushes us to develop models connecting a subjective inside to an objective outside; the inside/outside boundary *itself* cannot be the focus of the analysis. By contrast, a focus on 'the subject' has no such orientation and, in fact, opens novel possibilities for analyzing social relations, as we will illustrate in this final section. How to find better ways of analyzing the social is a central question for IPS. Language affords one option. A descent "into" the subject affords another. We consider each in turn.

In between ("inter") the subjects: Language as the intersubjective social structure par excellence

Language furnishes an apt site for disclosing the social dynamics of intersubjectivity. First, a language (such as French, Danish, or Kiswahili) is a reservoir of common meanings and rules that are shared amongst those who speak it. It indexes a "community of speakers" (Saussure 1959: 77). In this it designates a collective in a basic sense. Language is a "social" and a "historical," as opposed to a physical, fact, as the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure emphasized. It is not just a collection of sounds or phonemes that the ear captures (which would make it a physical fact). Rather, as Saussure (1959: 13) put it, "When we hear people speaking a language that we do not know, we perceive the sounds but remain outside the social fact because we do not understand them." The common language circulating between the speakers delineates a space of commonality, a social space. Partaking in it requires a prior process of socialization (having learned the language). Saussure's (1959: 114) other key piece of evidence for the social (and not merely physical) facticity of language is what he calls "the arbitrary nature of the sign."[16] By this, Saussure simply means that the relation between the signifier (the word "tree," for example) and the signified (the actual tree that it conjures) is not spontaneous or innate, wired into a person's brain. If it were, all languages would use the same word for the same object, which is demonstrably not the case. Instead, the relation between the signifier and the signified, through which all meaning emerges, is the contingent product of the sedimented conventions that are specific to that language (here, English), not the expression of general features of the human mind. Meaning is a social construct, not a natural given. Saussure (1959: 10) defines language as "both a social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of

necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty."

In this section, we develop language as a key point of entry for appraising the social dynamics of mutual constitution that take place *between* subjects at the two different levels at which intersubjectivity can be considered. First, drawing on Wittgenstein, we analyze how the speaking subjects interact with one another in and through language. "Intersubjectivity," in this first sense, refers to the dynamic but organized social space between two subjects. Second, we follow Saussure to tease out the structures underwriting sociality itself. This is the other, deeper, sense of intersubjectivity. Saussure's (1959: 13) understanding of language as constituting not just a "social fact" but the quintessential *social structure* furnishes a powerful antidote to the narrow, largely physicalist understandings of "structures" that feature widely in individualist IR. It enables us to parse the sociality of the international. In the final part of this section, we will introduce a distinction between 'language' and the concept of 'discourse' that enables us to operationalize this model of language for empirical analyses.

In-between the subjects: Language games

We begin with the dynamics of mutual constitution that play out between speaking subjects. Here, a key inspiration is Ludwig Wittgenstein's later work, in which he uses the metaphor of a "game." "Suppose it were asked, '*When* do you know how to play chess? All the time? Or just when you are making a move? And the *whole* of chess during each move?—How strange that knowing how to play chess should take such a short time, and a game so much longer!' " (Wittgenstein 1958: 59) The humor of this observation shows precisely the problem with treating the rules of a game only as a parametric structure to which individuals have to conform. Instead, the rules are a social phenomenon that show themselves *as* people play a game, perhaps most explicitly as questions arise about whether a particular move does or does not conform to the rules.[17] In such instances, Wittgenstein reminds us, we would quickly get into an infinite regress if we tried to refer questions about the rules to a set of binding meta-rules, but fortunately we can avoid that problem by referring instead to established *social practices* (Wittgenstein 1958: 81; see also Tanney 2000):

> there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not* an *interpretation*, but which is exhibited in what we call "obeying the rule" and "going against it" in actual cases. … "obeying a rule" is a practice. And to *think* one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule "privately," because otherwise thinking that one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it.

In this pithy dismissal of the idea of a private language, Wittgenstein skewers the notion that meaning is a *subjective* phenomenon even as he dismisses the idea that meaning is an *objective* phenomenon. Instead, our attention is directed to the social practices in terms of which, and out of which, we make meaning, tacitly conspiring with one another

through our "joint action" (Shotter 1993) to produce and reproduce the particular social settings in which we find ourselves.

When playing a game of chess, it is not the case that two pre-social 'individuals' sit down at a chessboard and proceed to make moves in accordance with the rules. Rather, *in the playing of* a game of chess, the rules are creatively drawn on by both parties in a way that (re)produces both the "game" and the "players." In other words, the actors sitting at the chessboard are *subjects* rather than 'individuals', and their agency is endogenous to their mutual imbrication. They create and cultivate relations between themselves in the course of playing the game, which has the effect of shaping them as players and stabilizing the rules of the game. This, in turn, makes it possible to evaluate, for instance, which of them is a better player. This Wittgensteinian analysis of games discloses that in any rule-governed situation that sets two subjects in relation to one another, we must examine the "inter" of intersubjectivity as a structured space of interactions in order to make sense of what is going on. Interaction is structured in that the actors do not just do as they please in interacting with one another. They observe the rules of the game. Yet, they also interact genuinely and creatively. They do not simply obey the rules or react to a pre-given, exogenous structure; instead, they "go on" in a way that they themselves practically judge to be appropriate in the circumstances (Medina 2010).

Such an approach easily "scales up" from the interpersonal setting of a game of chess to the broader arrangements of social life that typically involve more than two subjects. This is amply illustrated by the classical sociological tradition, although it does not typically invoke language as explicitly. Max Weber, for example, although localizing action at the level of the individual person, was committed to building his sociology out of a collection of ideal-typical relational elements, which has the effect of embedding the interacting subjects in patterned transactions. Indeed, Weber defines "motive" as "the meaningful context that appears, to the actor himself [*sic*.] or to an observer, to be the relevant and appropriate 'basis' for a form of behavior" (Weber 2019: 87) and *not* as a subjective element inside of any individual's head. That makes a Weberian motive an intersubjective factor, something that is held and sustained as part of the relational setting in which actors find themselves. Weber then develops his three ideal-types of legitimate rule using that definition of a "motive," arguing that it is patterns of social transaction and not any intrinsic characteristics of particular persons or personalities that explain social outcomes. As such, and very much in line with Anthony Giddens's (1984) understanding of the "structuration" of societies, actors are socially embedded and relationally constituted subjects, not autonomous individuals. Gidden's structuration theory, which emphasizes the dual, enabling and constraining, dimension of social structures (this is how they are "structuring"), also tacitly draws on the social fact of language. For language, too, is enabling in that a reservoir of common meanings furnishes the means by which the subjects understand one another and are able do things

with each other. But it is also constraining in that, to be understood, its subjects have to observe the grammar and syntax of that language.

However, both Giddens and Weber, like the vast majority of the classical sociological tradition, stopped their analyses at the boundaries of the sovereign territorial state. Extending this relational sensibility into the international is precisely the IPS project.[18] It requires taking the "Janus-faced" (Skocpol 1979: 32) or "inside/outside" (Walker 1993) nature of the state seriously: realizing that it is not merely an inward-turned concept that captures the organization of domestic rule but that it also has an outward-turned dimension and indexes an actor on the international stage. As such, the kind of actor that the state is better approached as a 'subject' rather than as a pre-social 'individual', as long as we pay attention to the specific social context to which the state belongs: the international. As with our earlier discussion of language games, the social relations out of which state subjects are continually constituted and reconstituted cannot be easily divided into "internal" and "external" relations, but instead form the context within which state boundaries are drawn: the boundary of an actor "*never marks a real exterior*. … It is a line drawn internally, *within* the network of institutional mechanisms through which a certain social and political order is maintained" (Mitchell 1991: 90). In the contemporary international system, "sovereignty" marks the site where much of this boundary-drawing is accomplished (Bartelson 1995), and to ask how a state's sovereignty is produced is to ask, in effect, how a state becomes an international subject or actor. Here also, we see different visions of how international affairs should be ordered, animating a variety of international institutions, carrying with them different international subjects: for example, sovereignty as formal equality versus sovereignty as a substantive rejection of domination by others (Getachew 2019).

Language and social structure

We now turn to our second dimension of language as furnishing an exemplary model for foregrounding the sociality of the international—indeed, of any social arrangement—insofar as it holds the meta-structure that makes social life possible in the first place. We know we have a social setting or an institution when there is a common language, whether at the local level (per the subcultures long analyzed by sociologists and anthropologists) or indeed at the global level. The latter is exactly how IR scholars first uncovered the sociality of the international: despite the very many languages (in the narrow sense, e.g. French, Danish, Kiswahili) that are spoken across the international system, there are common meaningful practices that make possible not only mutual understandings but also the meaningful engagements between states that remain quite mysterious for individualist IR. These are what the English School called the institutions of international society, such as sovereignty or diplomacy (as in Bull 1977).

Underwriting them is one institution that is more primary still and that enables all others to function: language. It furnishes the basic structure of exchange upon which common understandings can develop in the first place, and out of these, in turn, other institutions can be built.

Conversely, and to put the point in another way, the existence of common understandings, and indeed of collective speaking practices, such as diplomacy, indicate that this structure is at work. It is both enabling (it enables states to understand each other) and constraining (certain rules must be observed for agreements to be reached), like all social structures. It is the meta-structure underwriting sociality. Saussure's distinction between "*a* language" (*la langue*), like Kiswahili or French, and "language" (*le langage*; note that English uses the same word for both) may be useful for differentiating these two levels at which language can be considered: as a contingent, historical and social *fact*, on the one hand; and on the other, as the deep *structure* underwriting all social arrangements or institutions, which enables them to function by allowing the actors interacting within it to understand each other and to work together.[19]

'Language' and 'discourse'

The model of language affords a productive way of understanding social structures in general—including the social structure of the international system. The international is the highest, most encompassing domain of political analysis. Its subjects consequently range from states and international organizations (at the highest level) to social groups, to subgroups, to individuals. More often than not, and depending on the issue area under examination, they include a combination of these. The main theoretical point is that IPS does not pre-decide who are the relevant actors (should the focus in this study be on states? International organizations? Nongovernmental organizations? Firms? Individuals?), and it does not exclude any one of these ex ante. The analysis is instead scaled up or down according to the questions driving the enquiry of a given study.

Treating actor-hood as an *empirical* rather than an ex ante *theoretical* question, to be resolved in each particular case by a close reading of the meaningful exchanges in the relevant domain of practice, also serves to solve an intractable problem in individualist IR, known as the levels-of-analysis problem. It avoids having to decide in advance whether the focus in a study on a given issue area should be on states, firms, nongovernmental organizations, or international organizations, which are all, instead, considered as "speaking subjects" (as in Epstein 2011). Hence, it is possible to find, for example, that a given set of international arrangements are underpinned by a "civilizational" actor like "the West" and make little sense if understood even as the coordinated behaviors of putatively individual-autonomous sovereign states (Jackson 2006).

Substantially, understanding the international via the lens of language entails apprehending it as composed of a series of intersubjective spaces, each with their own languages. Given (from what we have just seen) that languages are social systems, this is yet another way of underlining that the international is social all the way down, whether the relations being analyzed run between states, between groups, or even individuals. However, one problem scholars are faced with is how to roughly determine where one intersubjective space ends and another begins.[20] A more fine-grained concept is needed to circumscribe these structured spaces of interaction. 'Discourse' furnishes that concept. A discourse is "a cohesive ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations about a specific object that frame that object in a certain way and, therefore, delimit the possibilities for action in relation to it" (Epstein 2008: 2).[21] How the subjects interact with one another is regulated by the discourses that are proper to the intersubjective space where they do so,[22] which prescribe appropriate modes of behavior and policy courses.

'Discourse' underlines the deep imbrications of agency and sociality. It draws out that language is not external to actions. It is not merely the medium of social interaction; that would enable the subjects to communicate, but all of the important dynamics would unfold outside of language (either inside the actors' heads or in their *individual* perceptions of their material conditions). Nor is it reducible to the means by which the action is made sense of *post hoc*. Instead, discourse is properly constitutive of actions and practices. It is part and parcel of the actors' decisions to act in the first place. This means that subjects do not step into the arena with ready-made ('subjective') ideas about what they want to accomplish, even—and perhaps especially—when they think they do. Their notion of what is the right thing to do, or even what is in their interest, is shaped, or reshaped, by these discourses, in the intersubjective spaces they inhabit. Otherwise, to take just one example, it would be difficult to explain why a majority of states in the International Whaling Commission (IWC) who previously supported whaling suddenly adopted drastic whale-saving policies in the early 1980s—or, indeed, why some (like Luxembourg or Switzerland) continue to remain members of the IWC when they have no coast (in the cases of Luxembourg or Switzerland). States' understanding of the appropriate course of action and what policies it is in their interest to support was decisively reshaped at this specific point in time by the rise of a new, anti-whaling discourse (see Epstein 2008). Discourses operating at the international "level" provided the basis for action on the part of the state actors understood not as pre-social individuals but as socially produced subjects, the terms of whose agency cannot be extricated, even in principle, from the social context that gives rise to them.

The intra-subjective

Let us now consider how 'the subject', the concept at the core of intersubjectivity, affords an especially productive way of understanding how the social dynamics of

mutual constitution produce the social actor *qua* social actor in the first place. But first, a few words on 'the subject', intersubjectivity, and 'intra-subjectivity'. The 'subject' is a philosophical category that was first established as the founding stone of modern Western philosophy by the French thinker René Descartes in the early seventeenth century. The nineteenth-century German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel then developed its relational dimensions, thus retooling the concept for sociology and political science—or indeed, for IPS. Hegel effected two shifts. First, he shifted the focus from the single subject toward intersubjectivity proper—toward social relations. He achieved this by way of what is known as the master–slave dialectic, which he developed. What the Hegelian dialectic also achieved, however, second—and here is where its real purchase for IPS lies—is that it moved the analysis one level down still *into* the subject. Indeed, Hegel's master and slave are, in fact, two characters in a drama unfolding in the same person's conscience. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) is an account of becoming conscious, of how the subject, of self, becomes a conscious self in the first place.

By extensively unpacking the dynamics of the making of the subject, Hegel moved the analytical focus from the space *between* the subjects, or *inter*subjectivity, that we explored in the previous section via the language paradigm, to that *within* the subject: to the *intra*-subjective. Hegel cast the focus on what makes a subject a subject (or self) in the first place. In Hegel's wake, the clinical work on childhood psychology in the twentieth century then elaborated the strongest possible model of intersubjectivity. These elaborations showed why intersubjectivity comprises the basic structure not just of sociality but of selfhood, and how the two are inseparable (see Epstein, Lindemann, and Sending 2018).

Far from being a pre-given individual with already constituted political interests that he or she inherently knows how to maximize, the subject, Hegel showed, only emerges as a subject or self in the first place in and through its interactions with other subjects. Intersubjectivity, here, is not merely the space between the subjects. It is properly the matrix that produces the subjects and the social systems within which they interact. In Hegel's radical understanding, the subject is not merely interacting with other subjects "on the outside" to obtain what she or he wants. To be a subject in the first place, capable of acting in the world, let alone of knowing what one wants, requires that one's subjecthood—one's status as a subject[23]—has been previously recognized by other subjects. This recognition is a condition of possibility of subjecthood. It is not something the subject can bestow upon her or himself. It requires an Other. It has an intersubjective structure. Hegel thus locates intersubjectivity at the most foundational, constitutive level: at the core of the subject itself.

With the model of language, we saw, in the previous section, how the subjects relate to one another in the act of exchanging, of communicating. Their mutual understandings are underwritten by an intersubjective structure within which they have already implicitly recognized each other as sharing, at the least, a common language, and likely

some common customs as well.[24] These meaningful and often iterated interactions are themselves what we might call recognition activities generative of social bonds. They are simply missed by individualist approaches, as we showed earlier. Hegel pushes much further the understanding of how deeply these recognition dynamics reach *within* the subject. Indeed, in the linguistic or relational model we considered in the last section, it is still possible to have pre-given individuals, fully formed, who grant each other recognition once they have entered the social interaction but who do not really *need* to do so, let alone have to do so in order to become themselves in the first place. In other words, the account of intersubjectivity that we developed previously by way of language is still (potentially) individualistic. Intersubjectivity might still be secondary, derivative, a place where subjects happily (or unhappily) encounter one another but do not really need each other in a developmental and an existential sense. The bonds of sociality would then remain ultimately superficial, because they would be secondary.

By shifting the question, from "How do the speaking subjects interact?" to "How does one become a conscious subject in the first place?," Hegel decisively undercut the possibility of falling back onto the assumption that the subject can exist prior to its interactions with other subjects and thus outside of intersubjectivity. He pulled the foundations from under all individualist social theories. In opening the developmental question of how an individual consciousness emerges in the first place, Hegel found that the dynamics of recognition operate at a much deeper level than the in-between of subjects. Intersubjective processes properly constitute the subject qua speaking, acting subject in the first place. Self-awareness develops through the process of being recognized as a constituting a Self by an Other. It takes an Other to become oneself (see Epstein 2018).

Hegel's original insights were subsequently developed by the clinical work on the psychological development of the child and specifically by the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (2001) in his analysis of "mirror stage," which builds on Freud's earlier discoveries. Self-recognition, Lacan also found, is *necessarily mediated by an Other*. The mirror stage refers to moment in the child's development when it begins to shift out of its complete dependence on its environment for the satisfaction of its physical and emotional needs (infancy proper) and takes its first steps toward developing its autonomy. This stage performs crucial "orthopaedic" functions in the child's development, as Lacan (2001: 5) put it: the biological underdevelopment of the human infant (other species can walk or crawl at birth) gives time and space for this assembly of the self to take place.[25] It is the moment when the child begins to "put itself together" as one, as a being separate from its environment.

Lacan called this "the mirror stage" in reference to the paradigmatic situation where Freud had first identified these dynamics of self-making. Freud observed the profound jubilation expressed by the child the instant it recognizes itself in the image to which a caregiver was pointing in the mirror before it. The child's excitement, Freud found, was

caused by this very experience of putting itself together, of discovering itself as a contoured, discrete being. This moment is an important antidote to the child's earlier infant experiences of fragmentation, of itself as an uncoordinated being.[26] While the movement of recognition seems to be coming from the child and thus to be subjective, the purpose of the model is to draw attention to the function of the mirror in this stage of development, or rather to the parent or caregiver pointing to the reflected image and linking it back to the child ("That's you!"). What developmental psychology thus draws out is that it takes an Other to hold up the proverbial mirror before the subject, and to name its reflection as being its own, for self-recognition to occur. The mechanics of self-recognition turn on this three-point hook-up, whereby the image (first point) is linked to the child/self (second point) by a parent/Other, and through language (by saying to the child, "Look, that is you"). The relation to the self is always mediated by an Other; here, both the parent and language, through which the parent establishes the link between the child and its image.[27]

The Hegelian–Lacanian model renders both the social logic of the subject's constitution and the depth of its dependence on intersubjective connections in order to be a subject and actor in the first place. By the same token, the model shows that even the boundary between the intra- and the intersubjective is constituted through the interactions between self and other, thus in intersubjectivity. Along similar lines, relational accounts of agency that center and foreground temporality—as in Emirbayer and Mische (1998)—establish that the subject's grasp of itself as a subject in the first place depends both on memory and on projected future planning, both of which are impossible in the absence of a social context in which plans can be appraised and formulated and memories can be refined and reinforced. Here again, the very subject-hood of the subject is shown to be inextricably dependent on Others, "all the way down," and there simply *is no* pre-social core of individual selfhood that could somehow precede, or stand outside of, sociality. Instead, subjects require one another to be subjects in the first place, and the line separating subjects from one another *necessarily* runs right through those subjects themselves.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have proposed and developed the distinction between 'the individual' and 'the subject' as foundational to an IPS. US-centric IR more or less invariably begins with the former notion, resulting in theories and accounts of how pre-social actors engage one another with varying degrees of strategic foresight and lack the capacity, even in principle, to fundamentally alter either their own circumstances or the rules of the game that they find themselves playing. By contrast, IPS places the latter notion at its heart, giving us accounts in which subjects that are through and through socially constituted are *continually* making and remaking their worlds—not in an

individually arbitrary way but as a matter of principle and as a theoretical postulate. Far from a world of contingent individual choices, the IPS sensibility reveals a world of *ongoing social actions*, a dynamic flow of activity that can only be grasped contextually. We have suggested that language, discourse, and the dialectic of mutual recognition are helpful conceptual tools for cutting into this dynamic flow and doing so in a way that preserves the key insight of intersubjectivity: there simply are not, and can never be, completely autonomous subjects standing on some sort of pre-social foundation. Being a subject in the first place means participating in ongoing social practices that take place intersubjectively, whether "between" subjects or "inside" of them. Indeed, that very distinction is *itself* intersubjectively drawn and sustained, further underscoring that the individualist dream of escaping sociality in favor of some sort of foundational autonomy is nothing but an illusion. IPS is founded on the theoretical wager that we can do without this illusion and that this sociological turn to the intersubjective will produce better accounts of our global—our political, our international, our international political—life together.

Notes

1. See e.g. Basaran et al. (2017).
2. Although this discourse certainly has a presence far beyond the borders of the United States (see Tickner and Blaney 2012, 2013), we choose to label it "US-centric" because the institutional centers of gravity for what is sometimes called "mainstream" or "anglophone" IR are quite firmly located in US universities and in journals headquartered in such universities. While not unquestionably dominant globally (Turton 2016), this discourse is certainly present and powerful almost everywhere around the world of international studies.
3. One inspiration for this distinction is Searle (1995), whose work does not *and cannot* feature the notion of intersubjectivity because of its root commitment to 'the individual.' Instead, we get a notion of "collective" that never escapes being an aggregation of individual images in individual heads. See below.
4. The distinction we have in mind here involves the first two terms of Dewey and Bentley's (1949) contrast between self-action, inter-action, and trans-action. For further discussion, see Emirbayer (1997) and Jackson and Nexon (1999). Also see the next section, where we connect "trans-action" to intersubjectivity.
5. Note that the chart that follows is ideal-typical, and thus unrealistically precise, and is in no way intended to be an empirically accurate depiction of the relationship among actually existing bodies of scholarship in international studies. It is, instead, an effort to isolate a set of core theoretical commitments that inform scholarship in a variety of ways, including in (sometimes tension-filled) combination in the work of particular scholars. In this way, we follow the lead of the field-mapping exercises in Ashley (1986), Elman and Elman (2003), and Jackson and Nexon (2009), rather than the more empiricist approach informing work such as Alker and Biersteker (1984) or Turton (2016).
6. "Classical" realists are harder to place in this box, since their work features—in some readings—a greater role for subjective, and sometimes even intersubjective, factors. Likewise, E. H. Carr, typically regarded as a "realist," has a dialectical sensibility that suggests that he belongs more with materialists than with instrumentalists. See below.
7. Waltz (1979) is perhaps the best-known effort to develop a theory of international politics in which the action takes place *entirely* at the level of the structure of the system, outside of even the potential influence of any actor and their subjective beliefs. However, Waltz ultimately fails to be able to integrate the action of the system with that of states, whom he still also wants to retain as actors in a meaningful sense (as opposed to being entirely determined by that system). In this way, he reverts to hyper-individualist economic theories to account

for the latter's agency. Unless read ideal-typically (Goddard and Nexon 2005; Wæver 2009), this move ironically forces Waltz's "structural" theory back toward individualism.

8. Note that, for Wolfers, the only alternative to "objective" is "subjective." Precisely because of the figure of 'the individual' at the heart of his approach, factors are either internal to or external to an actor and cannot be located more liminally, in an *intersubjective* space.
9. Adler's thinking on these points has evolved over the years, and his most recent statement (Adler 2019) departs from his earlier articulation in some significant ways.
10. Contrast, for example, this materialist notion of hegemony with the version of hegemony one finds in "hegemonic stability" theories of various sorts (Kindleberger 1974; Webb and Krasner 1989). For that latter tradition, which is squarely in what we have called the instrumentalist camp, the balance of relative capabilities more or less automatically produces a set of interstate arrangements—and any time lag between arrangements and the distribution of capabilities is due to people not revising their computations of relative power quickly enough (as in Gilpin 1981). With no autonomous realm of intersubjectivity, the creativity and contingency of a successful hegemonic project is replaced by the more or less accurate depiction of objective conditions.
11. On closer examination, all ideational/psychological accounts seem to presume a common language in which the actors can express themselves (and which the analyst can learn, so as to make sense of their actions in the first place, Moon 1975), despite the impossibility of getting from independent autonomous actors to anything like a language common to all of them, which, as we will show below, indexes intersubjectivity. Hence, we might say that ideational/psychological accounts cannot help but import some intersubjective notions into their accounts but then recode those notions as if they were merely subjective.
12. The owned/unowned distinction is derived from Rescher (1996).
13. This is what Dewey and Bentley (1949) referred to as "trans-action."
14. Understood in IR's sense as the absence of centralized political authority.
15. The English school sees different degrees of sociality according to how alike the actors are to each other and how closely they interact. But even in a system where the ties are loosest, what it terms "the international system," the existence of common diplomatic practices and shared norms, evidences some degree of sociality. A modicum of relationality is required to enable the actors to understand each other, to know how to act with each other, and certainly to act in concert.
16. The sign, which, for Saussure, is the basic unit of language, is made of two parts: the signifier, which is the word or phoneme, like "tree," and the signified, which is the actual tree that it conjures. Saussure's broader purpose was to understand signification, or how language is used to make meaning. The relation between the signifier and the signified is the basic signifying relation, through which all meanings emerges.
17. As Saussure (1959: 77) also put it: "Language never exists apart from its social fact."
18. Here, it is worth mentioning Friedrich Kratochwil's work (e.g. Kratochwil 2013, 2018), since he has consistently sought to do just this—not least through a focus on the language of international law (Jackson 2022).
19. This does not entail that "intersubjectivity" implies a cooperative or optimistic view of the social world: cooperation can, and does, often break down. It emphasizes simply the relationality of the space of interactions.
20. Even if clean separations between these spaces of interactions are unlikely to exist in practice, and taking into account that several may overlap, not least when they share a common language. The point here is to offer a concept that does capture how the subjects can interact around a number of issues: discourse. The presence of discourses circulating amongst the actors tends to index the existence of an intersubjective space.
21. Language is the more generic term, the vast reservoir of shared meanings. "Discourse" is the more specific term; discourses are always *about* an object or policy problem. They are also more clearly tethered to action.
22. An intersubjective space may be regulated by several overlapping discourses. For example, the International Whaling Commission, where states debate whaling policies, is regulated by the generic language of statehood considered earlier that underwrites all international organizations, as well as by (today) the anti-whaling discourse, which has come to replace a prior discourse (see Epstein 2008).
23. "Status" here names not an attribute of an actor but the very actor-hood of an actor, unlike in, e.g. Lebow (2008).
24. On the importance of the presumption of commonality and shared competence, regardless of whether such commonality actually obtains in a given situation, see Medina (2004).

25. Compare, in this respect, Harrison White's (1992) account of how the self reassembles itself in an *ongoing* manner, in part by participating in social routines like that followed in the morning after waking up. In this respect, we might think of Hegel's comment on the importance of reading the morning newspapers as a critical component of (re)constituting the subject as a *citizen*. See also Benedict Anderson's (1991) justly celebrated account of the formation of national identities through participation in common rituals—including the reading of newspapers in vernacular languages!—that instantiate and thematize common experiences.
26. These experiences of fragmentation are also explored in other parts of psychoanalysis, such as object relations theory, notably in the works of Melanie Klein and of Donald Winnicott.
27. Lacan signals this conflation of the caring (the parent) and social (language) functions by capitalizing "Other."

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CHAPTER 7

DISCOURSE

TANJA AALBERTS

INTRODUCTION

Following the linguistic turns in philosophy in the twentieth century,[1] International Relations (IR) turned to discourse and language in the 1980s. Retrospectively identified as one of the first "turns" in IR,[2] there are two parallel trajectories to the introduction of language as a research agenda in IR. On the one hand, post-structuralist approaches focused on the role of discourses, signs, and text (e.g. George 1984; Ashley 1984; Der Derian and Shapiro 1989; Ashley and Walker 1990), whereas the original introduction of constructivism by Nicholas Onuf (1989) and Friedrich Kratochwil (1991) focused on the role of speech acts and language games.[3] The philosophical discussion about the relationship between "word" and "world" inspired new ways of thinking about how subjects and objects are given meaning and endowed with identities and agency in world politics through the power of discourse. While the pioneers were united in their post-positivist outlook, some mainstream approaches soon followed suit to more or less implicitly integrate the ubiquitous role of language in world politics in their own positivist way, focusing on "interaction" and "idea(tional power)" (Wendt 1999) or framing its role as rhetoric (Beer and Hariman 1996). All of these approaches adopt different ways of conceptualizing the relationship between language, meaning, and identity. They illustrate distinct ontological and epistemological stances and are differently positioned vis-à-vis the three nodes of International Political Sociology (IPS) as defined in this Handbook, with a specific focus in this chapter on intersubjectivity.

Proceeding from the discussion on intersubjectivity by Epstein and Jackson (this volume), the chapter zooms in on the linguistic turn and its lineages to discuss how their understandings of the "word–world" relationship informs their conceptualization of intersubjectivity, as a basis to analyze the international as a space constituted by social and political relations and practices. Where Epstein and Jackson discussed discourse as a model or a heuristic tool for appraising social dynamics and fathom the concept of intersubjectivity, this chapter focuses on the role of language and discourse in constructing the world(s) we live in. While agreeing with their conclusion that mainstream variants of constructivism have a limited social ontology and ultimately

belong to their category of "individualist IR," mainstream constructivism is still included in the discussion here, for one thing, because "intersubjectivity" is part of their analytical vocabulary. Furthermore, a discussion of the conventional constructivist conceptualization of intersubjectivity puts the key contributions of IPS in sharp relief. That being said, in light of the stated aims of this Handbook and the IPS research agenda, it is somewhat paradoxical to focus on "isms" and thus run the risk of reproducing disciplinary jurisdictional battles and narrowing down the space for open engagement (see also Huysmans and Pontes Nogueira 2017).[4] Hence, the focus is here more on the contributions of IR's linguistic turn as a whole, supplemented with a synopsis of distinctive philosophical inspirations, conceptual vocabularies, and linguistic strategies within post-structuralist and constructivist IR, as different modes to put the central tenets of linguistic turn to work.[5] As the background to this discussion, the next section first elaborates on a key shift within the philosophy of language, as exemplified by a transformation in Wittgenstein's thinking about the relationship between language and reality.[6]

Linguistic turns

As one of the protagonists of the linguistic turn in philosophy with his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922), Wittgenstein testifies of a double linguistic turn in his own thinking with the posthumous publication of his second opus magnus *Philosophical Investigations* (1958).[7] The early Wittgenstein, as *Tractatus* is often referred to, analyzes language as a transparent tool to describe the essence of the world out there. In other words, through language, we attach labels to an independent reality, and discourse serves to display or reveal the logic of that reality. This is also known as the picture view or correspondence notion of language—language logically "follows" or "mirrors" the object it names, and a statement is true or false insofar as it provides a(n) (in)correct picture of reality (Wittgenstein 1922: 2.1–2.2, notably para 2.021–2.0212 and 2.223).[8] However, in the opening paragraph of *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein distances himself from this perspective as it limits the meaning of a word to "the object for which [it] stands" and thus subordinates words to the world. This correspondence notion is inadequate as it cannot account for a whole array of language usages that lack a referent object, such as asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, and praying. Such examples show that language is not just a messenger or a label but, indeed, a form of action itself—it is a practice that brings about a situation or social reality.[9] The combination of language and "actions into which it is woven" consists of what Wittgenstein calls a language game (Wittgenstein 1958: paras 1, 7, 23).

Moreover, as the meaning of a word cannot reside in an object, it has no essence by itself but is the outcome of how it is used in practice. In other words, objects, reality,

and the world obtain meaning through the discourses in which they are intertwined (meaning-in-use). Crucially, this "use" is not an individual action or private language but depends on shared criteria, grammars, or frames of reference—in other words, meaning is intersubjectively constructed. Thus, Wittgenstein moves from identifying truthfulness of language as a picture of reality in the *Tractatus* to language as a "form of life"—as giving "form" to "life" (Onuf 1989: 44)—in his later work.[10] Words are not just what we say *about* the world but include a form of action *to* the world. This also has consequences for the philosophy of knowledge. If word–world are entangled, there is no independent truth about or reality out there. When it is stated that "this is how things are," says Wittgenstein (1958: para 114, IIxi: 200), we are "merely tracing round the frame through which we look at it. … The concept of 'seeing' makes a tangled impression."

This last issue points to a crucial element of the linguistic turn in IR, namely the intricate link between ontology (philosophy of being) and epistemology (philosophy of knowledge). The issue is not just *whether* language is an important ingredient of IR but rather *how* it is important and informing any type of inquiry (even those that reject its relevance for the analysis of IR). As such, the linguistic turn coincided with the Third Debate between positivist/rationalist and post-positivist/reflectivist approaches (Lapid 1989; see also Keohane 1988). The reflectivist agenda encompasses both post-positivism, by (i) rejecting naïve empiricism[11] and (ii) focusing on the production of knowledge, and the turn to language through its focus on (iii) the linguistic construction of reality and (iv) the question of subjectivity, that is the production of meaning and identity through power/knowledge (George and Campbell 1990: 270).[12]

Whereas reflectivist approaches[13] are often criticized for ignoring reality and reducing everything to discourse, this criticism mistakes an epistemological point ("How can we know?") for an ontological one ("What exists?"). The point is not whether reality exists but rather that facts cannot reveal themselves to us in an unadulterated fashion, as if speaking for themselves: "nature" cannot answer our calls, and hence "we cannot know the world independently of the language we use" (Adler 1997: 326). This means, as Wittgenstein also points out, that whenever we are talking about "facts," we are already structuring reality by identifying them as relevant and particular kinds of facts and, hence, engaging in an interpretation—a *re*presentation—of reality that might appear natural but is, indeed, of our own making. Where we "know" mammals, birds, reptiles, and fish simply by "seeing" (i.e. looking at them), a certain Chinese encyclopedia might recognize a whole lot of different kinds of animals, including "(a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) suckling pigs, … (l) *et cetera,* (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies."[14] In other words, "seeing" is a form of *re*-cognizing and producing reality, based on the discursive categories by which we order the world.

This brings us back to the notion of intersubjectivity as a concept that breaks through the dichotomy of objective materialism and subjective individualism (see Epstein and J ackson, this volume). Rather than subjective knowledge (internal to each actor) or objective existence (external to all actors), intersubjectivity can be conceptualized as a mutually agreed form of objectivity, which is external to each (as individuals) but internal to "all" (as a collectivity). Yet, who this "all" is, and what the boundaries of this collectivity are, is as much the product of discourse as the infamous "standard(s) of civilization" illustrates (Stroikos 2014). In other words, the power of discourse includes the production of objects as well as subjects, or in IR terms, who "count as" actors in and of world politics? And how are they constituted as such——how does an entity or an individual become an international political subject? This counts for proto-sovereigns' desire for recognition (Epstein, Lindemann, and Sending 2018) as much as refugees who mobilize the preamble, "We, the People" of the UN Charter (Moulin and Nyers 2007).

With the move to language and discourse as a system of meaning production, we thus move from the picture view of language (as something subjects use to describe objects) to an understanding of language as constitutive of both objects and subjects, meaning and identity. This also means that all language is political, whether it talks politics or not: by *re*presenting reality it produces the context on the basis of which we live, make choices, and justify decisions (e.g. to procure nuclear weapons) (Beaumont 2021) or who, what, and how to protect (Pallister-Wilkins 2020; Tazzioli and Stierl 2021). The two streams of the IR linguistic turn differ in how they further elaborate on this constitutive or productive role of language or discourse and the conceptual toolbox they use.[15] Interestingly, intersubjectivity most prominently appears as a key concept in conventional constructivist research, which uses it to discuss the construction of social reality without adhering to the epistemological hallmarks of the linguistic turn (i.e. the social construction of reality through discourse).[16] Somewhat paradoxically, this means that even if conventional constructivism is using one of its key terms, it is further removed from the central tenets of IPS as presented in this Handbook. The next sections discuss each of these variants in turn.

Language, rules, and speech acts

Operating at the intersection of legal and social theory, it is not surprising that both Onuf and Kratochwil (as the forerunners of critical constructivism)[17] are inspired by Wittgensteinian language games to elaborate on how the world and knowledge is constructed through language:[18] "The social world is intrinsically linked to language and … language because it is a rule-governed activity, can provide us with a point of departure for our inquiry into the function of norms in social life" (Kratochwil 1991: 6). Crucially, this not only connotes to behavioral rules ("thou shalt not intervene") but also

to the basic ordering principles, which define who gets to participate in the first place (who counts as an entity that is protected by the non-intervention principle). Thus, critical constructivists identify language as a practice, as a way of acting not just *in* but *upon* the world by bringing about meaning and identities and creating social order. This is nicely captured in the notion of speech acts—that is *How to Do Things with Words* (Austin 1962). Rather than descriptive tools, words are performative—they bring about what they seem to describe (Searle 1969).[19] The famous example is a vicar declaring a couple to be wedded; whereas he seems to describe them as man and wife, it is only through his speech act that they, indeed, become just that. Similarly, social and legal rules not only regulate the behavior of independent existing subjects but also "provide the chief agents in that society with their standing as such" (Onuf 1994: 15)—not just as chiefs, but as agents in the first place. Rules thus order the world but do not function as natural or causal laws. Rather, they order by providing both agents and observers "an unavoidable frame of reference [through] their scope and formality" (Onuf 1994: 15).[20]

Crucially, rules do not cause behavior but provide reasons for action: they are "the means which allow people to pursue goals, share meanings, communicate with each other, criticize assertions, and justify actions" (Kratochwil 1991: 11, 2014). As opposed to mainstream constructivist research, norms, hence, are not just intersubjective expectations of appropriate behavior, but indeed practices that make particular standpoints actions and identities possible and justifiable in the first place. Adhering to law is "not primarily a matter of 'being good', but rather a matter of submitting oneself to a rule which makes it possible 'to be' in the first place" (Ringmar 1995: 38). Declarations of independence provide an interesting example of speech acts as a ritual to constitute international subjecthood (Knotter 2021). In other words, agents become knowledgeable through their interactions with the world, through which they order that world at the same time (see also Giddens 1984). To get a hold on this continuous process of mutual constitution of people and society without privileging the one over the other, analysis should "start in the middle," says Onuf, with rules as a third element that connects agents and structure and works in both directions: "individuals and society continuously constitute each other through the medium of rules, and [those] rules depend on the performative power of language" (Onuf 1994: 4).[21] This, in turn, means that rules provide guidance by telling us how to carry on but do not, and cannot, provide (causal) closures as they themselves are part and parcel of an argumentative practice through which agents figure out what they—the rules—say or mean (Koskennie mi 2005 [1989]). Linsenmaier et al. (2021) discuss norm polysemy in the context of ambiguity meaning-in-use of rules.

Analyzing social order by observing behavior then leaves a "tangled impression" indeed. Truth, in the social world, becomes nonsensical, or trivial at best, if it is approached from descriptive observation, that is without paying attention to the language game. An illustrative example is when a phone call—"Is Jim there?"—is

finished by the receiver with "Yes." While the answer is "right" (Jim is there), the response is "wrong" as the meaning of the question has been misunderstood by taking the words at face value rather than paying attention to the language game (Kratochwil 2001: 29–30).[22] Similarly, we can only make sense of seeing someone kicking a round object into a space demarcated in the air with poles in the context of the rules of the game of soccer, which identify this object and related practice as a goal. Furthermore, whether it is rational or strategic for this person to take this particular action depends on his or her situation and identity in relation to the game (are they part of the team or the audience; whose goal is it; what is their role in the team?). In other words, the bounds of sense, truth, and rationality are intersubjectively created through the rules of language games (Connolly 1974; Kratochwil 1987). Through a transformation of the language game, even "targeted killing" can become a legally relevant and reasonable practice (Schweiger 2019). And because this is the case, we can only try to make sense of events from a historical vantage point, that is by looking into the contemporary narratives in which they are embedded. Yet, we too are embedded in narratives, and thus history is not "a storyhouse of fixed data," which we can observe from an objective viewpoint, but part and parcel of our constructions of identity and a product of memory (Kratochwil 2006): "We are always within our constructions, even if we choose to stand apart from them, condemn them, reconstruct them" (Onuf 1989: 43).

As ordering principles, rules unavoidably lead to an uneven distribution of benefits, privileging some over others. Moreover, the intersubjective nature of law—whose meaning is determined through argumentative practice—should not obscure the fact that legal arguments are always made from particular subject positions: "The particular and the universal are brought together through the saying of law" (Orford 2006: 10). Onuf (1989: 161) quotes Foucault (1977: 151) in this regard: "Rules are empty in themselves, violent and unfinalized; they are impersonal and can be bent to any purpose. The successes of history belong to those who are capable of seizing these rules." Thus rules are intrinsically connected to rule and thus political (Onuf 1989: 21–22, 128).

Speech-act theory figures most prominently within securitization theory, as developed by the Copenhagen School, to analyze the linguistic construction of threats and security. Security is not an ontological condition of the world but the outcome of a securitizing speech act, which defines a particular situation as "an existential threat to a designated object (traditionally, but not necessarily, the state, incorporating government, territory, and society)" (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998: 25). Moreover, and crucially, by identifying it as an existential threat, the issue is moved into the realm of emergency politics, requiring urgent action and allowing political leaders to take exceptional measures while surpassing normal procedures and rules for decision-making as well as human rights. Whereas securitizing speech acts have been used to push different agendas (e.g. on migration control (Baker-Beall 2019), global health (Wenham 2019), or climate change), they can also "backfire" when the audience does not buy into them (Warner and Boas 2019).

Discourse, difference, and subjectivity

Equally interested in the relationship between language, meaning, and identity, post-structuralist approaches take their inspiration from another branch of the linguistic turn in philosophy, notably Saussure's (1959) semiotics and discussion of the arbitrary or contingent relation between the sign and the signified (see Epstein and Jackson, this volume) to move beyond the picture view of language. Rather than a communicative tool through which subjects label objects, discourse refers to a whole range of representations through which we describe and order the world by creating meanings, identities, social relations, political possibilities, and ethical horizons. Crucially then, discourse constitutes objects and subjects alike. Through processes of signification, subjects are constituted as "subjects that know" as well as "objects of knowledge" and "objects of regulation" (Foucault 2004 [1970]: 340) as they are subjected to international protocols and regimes of truth that empower them as subjects in the first place (Dillon 1995: 341). In other words, international subjects are "written" through, for example, diplomatic texts (de Orellana 2020) and the principle of self-determination (Spanu 2020).

In this context, the reference to subjectivity—rather than identity—is not just a terminological shift but one that seeks to capture these dual dynamics of subjectivation (becoming a subject/agent) and subjugation (being subjected to). It also serves to distance the concept from essentialist connotations in some conceptualizations of identity, which conceive identity as an additional social layer or a cloak attained by subjects (as something to "have"). As such, "subjectivity" bears neither the inversely proportional relationship to "intersubjectivity" as a key term in conventional constructivism (see below) nor consists of the logical opposite of "objectivity" that the term seems to suggest. The primitive is "subject" (as noun) rather than "subjective" (as adjective). Subjectivity refers both to the imposition of meanings on subjects and the construction of their very being via meta-narratives. In other words, the notion of subjectivity refers to the construction of the subject as identity, agent, and individuality within the symbolic order, as opposed to the positivist assumption of the Cartesian subject as an origin and given starting point for analysis and an autonomous, rational, and complete identity in and of itself. Moreover, because subject-hood is produced through discourse, there are no settled identities: "The subject never achieves the completion or wholeness toward which it strives … [T]he subject is always in the process of being constituted; there is no point at which, however briefly, the performance is finished" (Edkins and Pin-Fat 1999: 1).[23] Hence the shift from subject to subjectivity to highlight a reiterative and ongoing process of subjectification, which places the subject in complex relations of production and signification (Foucault 1982; Butler 1993). Kurowska and Reshetnikov (2021) discuss the ambiguity and plurality of subjectivity in relation to stigma in international society. With a performative take on

securitization theory, Philipsen (2020) analyzes how authority is produced through such speech acts.

Another key element in the discursive production of subjects and objects, then, is relationality (see Go and Nexon, this volume). Saussure (1959) had already identified language as a system of relations between words as the source of meanings. Moreover, this linguistic system is defined by difference. Hence, subjects are not produced "on their own" but always in relation to another, to something which they are not—*Self* is always articulated in relation to *Other*: domestic/foreign, civilized/rogue, Western/non-Western, North/South, heterosexual/queer. Crucially, these juxtapositions are not neutral or equal but involve a hierarchical arrangement of symbols, ideas, and values, distinguishing what or who is normal from the abnormal—and "hence" threatening and something to be contained, excluded, combatted (Derrida 1976). Thus, meaning and identity are constructed through differentiation and discursive binaries (*différance*: Derrida 1978), which, in turn, direct action and legitimize political measures of in/exclusion. Whereas these oppositions may appear or are presented as natural and neutral (picture view)—and the political consequences as inevitable—post-structuralist analyses unpack or deconstruct how they are the product of discourse.[24] In other words, they unravel or deconstruct the knowledge and value structures that underlie these representations as a basis for critique and resistance.

These discursive representations include, but are not limited to, language as the spoken or written word (narrative discourse) but engage with "text" in a broad sense (discursive practices, including nonlinguistic signs).[25] That is to say, post-structuralism not only focuses on dominant linguistic forms of representation (such as official statements by political elites) but also analyzes popular culture, social media, images, and art as "everyday" frames of reference, artifacts, or icons (Hansen 2015) that produce meanings, subjectivities, and affectivities and carry their own (visual) politics (Bleiker 2018). For example, Cooper-Cunningham (2020) provides a feminist reading of *Ms Marvel* as a critical intervention against racialist and gendered stereotypes, and Rothe, Fröhlich, and Rodriguez Lopez (2021) analyze how digital technologies enable different forms of seeing, showing, and governing refugee camps.

Ideas, interaction, identity

"Intersubjectivity" is most commonly identified as a central concept in conventional constructivism to discuss how "anarchy [and the social world at large] is what we make of it." With this pithy title, Alexander Wendt (1992) moved beyond the anarchical picture that held IR captive, to paraphrase Wittgenstein, to argue that the anarchical structure is not a superfact of international reality.[26] As opposed to the epistemological wagers of the Third Debate and linguistic turn, conventional constructivism focuses on the construction of social reality as primarily an ontological project, while adhering to

the tenets of scientific positivism. This combination of a social ontology with a positivist epistemology puts this variant of constructivism "in the middle of the Third Debate" (Wendt 1999: 40), which, Wendt argues, enables it to build a bridge between mainstream IR and reflectivism. Opinions vary as to whether this is a sustainable endeavor,[27] but in any case, it informs constructivist conceptions of intersubjectivity and where it is positioned in the IPS landscape, as we shall see. The social ontology of conventional constructivism highlights how the social world exists by virtue of shared ideas, conventions, and norms that emerge through interaction. Together these bring about collective meanings which, in turn, frame the identities, interests, and actions of individual actors (Wendt 1999; Klotz 2001).

In this light, the notion of intersubjectivity rejects both the materialist and the individualist focus of rational-choice approaches by emphasizing the role of norms and ideas that are shared among actors and constitute their very identity and interests rather than merely (try to) regulate their behavior. Structures are nothing more or less than the outcome of interactions between agents, and hence intersubjective and social rather than material and "given" (cf. Giddens 1984). For international anarchy, it means that this can take different forms—even if an overarching authority is lacking, states are not locked in a Hobbesian logic but can decide to cooperate and create a Lockean or Kantian culture of anarchy, thus creating a different world order (Wendt 1999: ch. 6). Moreover, ideas and norms are part of the social structure too, and questions of legitimacy inform actors' interests and behavior as much as rationalist cost–benefit calculations. Actors consider it to be in their interest to be conceived as a good member of an international community, promoting its liberal values. Indeed, it can cost them heavily to be identified as a rogue state, as the sanctions regime against Iran clearly illustrates (for roguery as an intersubjective identity, see Kustermans 2014). This focus on structures as social and ideational constructs creates room not only for cooperation but also for social change. A big part of this constructivist agenda focuses on normative change brought about through interaction processes between a variety of actors, including nongovernmental organizations. The latter exercise ideational or normative power, even if they are not recognized as full international subjects yet (see, e.g. Davies 2019). As Bodur Ün (2019) shows, global norm diffusion is also shaped by local, non-Western norm entrepreneurs.

With this focus on norms and ideational structures, conventional constructivism seems to run parallel to its critical sibling, but the shift from "language" to "interaction"—losing the connection to the linguistic turn in philosophy—has a crucial impact not only on epistemological issues (addressed above) but also on how far this construction of social reality goes. Conventional constructivist approaches focus on interaction between subjects as a way to produce shared meanings and collective understandings as their shared social realm. These identities are conceived as different roles that actors can play in relation toward each other, and the different variants of anarchy they can together constitute (Hobbesian, Lockian, or Kantian), thus changing

their social identities and relationships (friends or foes).[28] Such role plays can fail when different identities clash, as Yom (2019) shows in the context of the Gulf Cooperation Council. But crucially, actors already enter the scene as subjects or agents (mostly states) based on a primordial identity they have in and of themselves. In other words, intersubjectivity is the outcome of interaction between pre-existing subjects (inter-subject), which changes their social or role identities but does not constitute their individuality as such. To put it differently, intersubjectivity connotes the space—the "inter"—between subjects. Thus, constructivism does not adhere to a fully processual ontology and addresses relationality in terms of social identities, not subjecthood per se. In comparison to reflectivist approaches, conventional constructivism is then also further removed from some of the central tenets of IPS as presented in this Handbook. This is, in itself, not so surprising as conventional constructivism is directed more toward mainstream approaches as its sparring partners.

Conclusion

In their chapter on 'intersubjectivity', Epstein and Jackson already problematize the implicit ontology lurking behind the prefix "inter-." While it helps to move from a purely individualist approach to a more relational perspective, in conventional constructivist readings this amounts to a circumscribed role of the social as an add-on "role" identity between already existing individual subjects. In that sense, they do not really move beyond an atomistic perspective but add a social layer to it. The linguistic turn pushes this further into a relational ontology, key to which is that the move from individuals or actors to subjects opens up a perspective on how their stated individuality is already the product of relations too (see also Jackson and Nexon 1999).

One of the key contributions of IPS to the analysis of world politics consists of its shift of perspective on boundaries. This shift can be characterized by means of Andrew Abbott's (1995) insightful formulation that we need to move from a focus on "boundaries of things"—that is to say, the conceptualization of boundaries as merely a marker of delineation around things that exist—to "things of boundaries"—focusing on how boundaries in fact help to produce the things they appear to represent. In other words, it pushes us to appreciate that the boundaries we encounter, whether as borders of a state, as legal categories, or the delineation of disciplinary fields and identities, are in fact socio-political artifacts. Boundaries are not representations of pre-given entities (e.g. states, global civil society, or academic disciplines) but, indeed, the product of practices, which constitute the bounds of what is alleged to be "there" as an established social, legal, or "natural" subject or truth. In other words, boundaries do, themselves, constitute practices and should be studied as such. Consequently, and crucially, IPS perspectives also take seriously the suffix "-ivity" as designating a processual view, that is to say, the ongoing processes of subject formation which often gets lost from

sight, despite a shift from individuals or actors to subjects. The critical aspect of the linguistic turn is that we need to investigate the pictures that hold us captive—the truths that we consider as common sense, the facts of the world that are presented as given realities, as "superfacts" representing the nature of IR as it is—by examining their grammars: what are the underlying assumptions that "ground them" (Pin-Fat 1997) or, in post-structuralist terms, what are the conditions of possibility to make such truth claims?

This chapter has identified two different strands of grammatical investigations within IR. Building on Wittgenstein, critical constructivism conceives of discourse as an argumentative practice and meaning-in-use that constitutes the language games through which "we" construct the "world of our making." Post-structuralism, on the other hand, focuses on grammatical structures of difference, taking their inspiration from inter alia Saussure. Both variants lead to a thick notion of intersubjectivity, which entails not only shared understanding and meanings as an ideational structure that regulates the interaction between given subjects ("inter-subjects") but also constitutes the subjects themselves as ongoing processes of signification and subjectification. As such, the "linguistic turn" has been a crucial intervention into contemporary IR theory. However, in its agenda to draw attention to the role of language and speech acts, it has, by and large, bracketed out other kinds of (symbolic) action—that is, practices and discourse in the broader sense—that are equally at play in the processes of signification in world politics. So, whereas the first generation of discursive explorations of the political, subjectivity, and sovereignty have focused predominantly on the symbolic in the form of linguistic articulations—signs, texts, and utterances— more recently, there is increasing attention within IPS for a more encompassing reading of discourse beyond logocentrism to interweave the discursive and the material (or properly conceive of discourses as practices à la Foucault).[29] But rather than a complete turnover, both the "practice turn" (Adler-Nissen, this volume) and the "new materialist turn" (Van Wingerden, this volume) build on the epistemological legacy of the "linguistic turn" that, by introducing a post-positivist outlook to IR theory, was nothing short of a paradigm shift in the Kuhnian sense.[30]

Notes

1. There are two phases or turns in philosophy: the first one is focused on the logic of language and relates to the birth of analytic philosophy in the 1920s. The second turn in the 1960s understands language as a social practice (Rorty 1967). It is De Saussure's introduction of semiotics, John L. Austin's speech acts, and the later Wittgenstein's turn to language games and "meaning-in-use" (ordinary language philosophy as opposed to ideal language philosophy) which has inspired the linguistic turn in IR. See further below.
2. The term was coined by Neumann (2002). See also Débrix (2003a).
3. This first generation of constructivism was later labelled "critical constructivism" to distinguish it from more mainstream variants that seek to combine a social ontology with a positivist epistemology ("conventional constructivism"). See, e.g. Hopf (1998); Price and Reus-Smit (1998).

4. Huysmans and Pontes Nogueira (2017: 299):

> IPS is not really an approach, let alone a school of thought, but more a signifier that connects people sharing a disposition toward traversing familiar, institutionalized repertoires of analysis; toward re-conceptualizing and displacing the questions that can be asked, the methods that can be used, the styles of arguing that are acceptable.

As an "intellectual sphere," it has a specific transdisciplinary outlook (Guillaume and Bilgin 2017; Huysmans and Pontes Nogueira 2017; Lisle 2017).

5. On the linguistic turn in general, see Fierke and Jørgensen (2001) and Débrix (2003a). For the merits of distinguishing between critical constructivism and post-structuralism, see Débrix (2003b).
6. Whereas Bourdieu has also acknowledged the affinities between his thinking and Wittgensteinian ordinary language philosophy, this connection has not been taken up by IR Bourdieusian approaches (Grimmel and Hellmann 2019). Hence, they are not discussed here, but in Chapter 8 on "Practices."
7. This paragraph draws from a more elaborate discussion of language games in Aalberts (2012). For a discussion of Wittgenstein's language philosophy and its relevance for IR, see also Fierke (2002).
8. This also implies a Cartesian subject, as an all-knowing individual who stands outside the world and describes it from an objective vantage point (Archimedean point), that is an objective subject, as the hallmark of scientific positivism.
9. As such, Wittgenstein's thinking is also of relevance to—but generally sidestepped by—the "practice turn" (Neumann 2002; Grimmel and Hellmann 2019).
10. " 'So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?'—It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life" (Wittgenstein 1958: para 241, emphasis in original).
11. As a theory of knowledge, empiricism holds that we can discover the truth through direct observation and that theories can, and must, be tested against reality composed of given and objective facts (correspondence theory of truth).
12. That language matters not only in international relations but also in International Relations as a discipline is clear from looking at the terms in which this debate was casted. George (1984) has already discussed how the boundaries of IR as an academic discipline are produced through linguistic techniques. On a different score, Sabotic (2021) problematizes IR's anglophonic bias.
13. Smith (2001) has elaborated reflectivism as an umbrella term for as variant approaches as (some forms of) feminism, critical theory, normative theory, postmodernism or post-structuralism, and historical sociology. Post-colonialism and critical constructivism also fall under this umbrella.
14. Michel Foucault uses this passage from Borges to introduce *Order of Things* (1970), which analyzes the role of discourse in producing reality by ordering the world into categories (Foucault 2005 [1970]: xv):

> This book first arose out of a passage in [Jorge Luis] Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought—*our* thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography—breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other.

15. Débrix (2002) illustrates the epistemological and political stakes involved in these different linguistic strategies through a US–China diplomatic crisis over the collision between a surveillance plane and a fighter jet.
16. This insightful formulation to distinguish different forms of constructivism in ontological and epistemological terms stems from Guzzini (2000).
17. It should be noted that Kratochwil shies away from identifying himself explicitly with constructivism and, particularly in his later work, adopts the vocabulary of practices and praxis (Kratochwil 2014, 2018) and drawing links between ordinary language philosophy and pragmatism, while distancing himself from dominant versions of practice theory in IR (Kratochwil 2007, 2011). For critical, constructive engagements with the oeuvres by Kratochwil and Onuf, see Kessler et al. (2010); Gould (2017).

18. Arguably, it is Charles Manning (1962) who is the real pioneer and critical constructivist avant-la-lettre. Prior to the linguistic turn, he advocated understanding IR as a socio-linguistic practice by means of Wittgensteinian language games in the 1960s (Suganami 2001; Aalberts 2010). Being ahead of his time, his work, however, remained marginalized within the IR discipline.
19. See Huysmans (2011) for a critical engagement with the concept of "act" in speech acts as employed by securitization theory in particular.
20. Thus Onuf (1989: 52, fn 13) problematizes the distinction by regulative and constitutive rules, as discussed by Searle (1969), as too strict.
21. Kratochwil (2014: 41–42) uses the same language to highlight the situatedness of all knowledge*:* as historical creatures, "we always start in the middle of things," and there is no such thing as a "view 'from nowhere' " [cf. Archimedean point], "beginning from scratch" or at the origin. Eggeling (2021) discusses practical, epistemic, professional, and political positionalities of the researcher in doing fieldwork.
22. This example is adopted from Michael Stubbs (1983), *Discourse Analysis,* University of Chicago Press, which Kratochwil (1991: 29) recommends for a good nontechnical discussion of the pragmatic dimensions of language.
23. See also the discussion on Lacan and the intra-subjective in chapter by Epstein and Jackson in this volume.
24. For guidance on (different forms of) discourse analysis in IR, see, e.g. Milliken (1999); Hansen (2006); Salter and Mutlu (2012); Aradau et al. (2014); Carta (2019).
25. Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams (2015) discuss how discourse analysis relates to new materialism. See also the chapter by Van Wingerden, this volume.
26. Waltz (1979: 8) himself describes theory as "a picture, mentally formed, of a bounded realm or domain of activity."
27. See, e.g. (2000) *Review of International Studies* 26 (1); Kratochwil (2000); Guzzini and Leander (2006).
28. While presenting different variants or games of anarchy, in philosophical terms, conventional constructivism still adheres to a picture view of language (Fierke 2003: 77–78).
29. For early calls for the return of practice and materiality to the linguistic turn, see respectively, Neumann (2002); Aradau (2010); Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams (2015). See further the chapter by Adler-Nissen, this volume.
30. Kuhn (1970). For a sociological analysis of IR's proliferating turns, see Baele and Bettiza (2021).

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CHAPTER 8

PRACTICES

REBECCA ADLER-NISSEN

INTRODUCTION

International Relations look different once we reckon with social practices. Our own study of those relations also begins to change. When we focus on practices,[1] we understand, for example, international diplomacy less as an institution structured by the meeting of national interests and more as an anthill where bodies and materials come together to produce the social world. From coffee-break gossip amid long multilateral negotiations to early career diplomats struggling to deal with established knowledge hierarchies,[2] to the migrants from conflict zones cleaning diplomatic offices: we realize that we must begin to ask what is at stake in diplomatic performances. The key for practice scholars is that everyday practices are not just epiphenomena of deeper structures. Instead, practices are constitutive in and of themselves: these everyday sayings and doings establish diplomacy as a socially meaningful practice. Discovering these dynamics is what paves the way for practice theory's potential. In essence, practice theory's value lies in its ability to uncover otherwise hidden power relations and hierarchies.

In this chapter, I introduce international practice theory and its fundamental assumptions. Most contributors to the practice turn are skeptical about the idea of a grand theory of international politics. Instead, they insist that the world is inherently messy and that this should not be minimized for the sake of simplicity (see also Leander 2010).

The purpose of this chapter is to emphasize not just the analytical value of focusing on practices but also how approaches within the practice turn differ in their understanding of international practices. In addition, the chapter points to the critical potential of the practice turn. In the first section, I discuss the practice theory landscape within International Relations (IR), including how it can be seen as both a pragmatic and critical endeavor. I then propose categorizing what I call the "ordering" (how practices stabilize the world) and the "disordering" (how practices destabilize the world) perspectives on practices. The ordering perspective is prominent in IR (represented by, e.g. communities of practice and social field theory). The disordering perspective focuses more on subordinate or ordinary people and their experiences of

power relationships (analyzing performances and improvizations). I address critiques surrounding practice approaches; that they are "overly" empirical, "native," and too preoccupied with the "micro" because they map and thereby conserve established social practices. I then address the critique that the practice turn is not invested enough in examining the repressive or disciplining structures of world politics (Epstein 2012). I end by discussing emerging debates within practice scholarship around emotions, identities, materiality, and technology.

Everyday international politics

International practice scholarship is a body of literature within IR that is interested in social practices. It aims to "liberate the human bodily and practical experience and ability to act upon and change the world from the constrictions of structuralist and systemic models—while avoiding the trap of methodological individualism" (Adler-Nissen 2016b: 2). The key assumption is that everyday actions and relations are consequential in producing social life. Ontologically, practice theory's most important contribution is specifying the focus of analysis: practice, that is, socially meaningful patterns of action (Pouliot and Mérand 2012). By telling social scientists where to start from—practices—practice theory moves beyond the usual social-theoretical dichotomies that have hitherto led to a metaphysical dead end. This means objecting to distinctions such as system and unit, micro and macro, and local and global. Practices are not limited to a particular "level of analysis," and they are not simply micro or interactionist. As Christian Bueger and Frank Gadinger (2018: 107) insist,

> it is equally appropriate to study a seemingly large scale, such as Foucault's studies of modernity, or histories of practices of war, as it would be meaningful to study practices with a different zoom on a distinct policy, let's say NATO's [North Atlantic Treaty Organization's] military doctrine, or an everyday interaction, such as guarding a military camp.

Taking my own research on international diplomacy as an example, this means moving away from treating global governance and international organizations as formal institutions centered on strategic events, such as summits, to the processes of enacting those organizations. It implies tracing the social activities that go into making the United Nations (UN) (MacKay and Levin 2015), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Martel 2020; Nair 2019), the African Union (Glas 2018), or NATO (Pouliot 2010; Berling 2015) what they are. This can be done by focusing on the bodies and materials involved, for instance the decoration of meeting rooms and the menu for the dinner of the Heads of the State and Government (see Neumann 2012 for an account of the diplomatic meal or McNamara 2015 for how the symbolic design of the euro coins and bills come to matter in everyday politics).

Such ordinary aspects of world politics are difficult to grasp because they often belong to the world of the unsaid and taken for granted. As French philosopher Maurice Blanchot (1987: 15) puts it,

> Nothing happens, this is the "everyday" … But what is the meaning of this stationary movement? At what level is this "nothing happens" situated? For whom does "nothing happen", if, for me, something is necessarily always happening?

Blanchot raises important methodological questions concerning where we look for "the action," and for how we develop our explanations of world politics. Here, practice theories diverge. One point of disagreement relates to questions of stability and change, as practices are inherently ambiguous. They are the very actions that sustain social order *and* those that subvert it. A focus on practices also raises questions of whether and how we can study intentionality and reflexivity, equally important issues for International Political Sociology (see also Drieshova and Bueger 2022 for an excellent overview of the "fault lines" of practice theory). In the rest of the chapter, I discuss how practice theories have been conceptualized and applied and argue that there are different understandings of practice at play and that it matters how we use them.

Conceptualizing practices

Practice theories constitute a broad intellectual landscape with roots in pragmatism, phenomenology, and critical theory. The seeds of the current practice turn (sometimes labelled "cultural" or "practical" turn) in the social and human sciences were planted in the late 1960s, at the same time as some of the canonical texts of the linguistic turn emerged. Originating in philosophy, sociology, and anthropology, practice approaches have also had considerable success in organization and management studies, professional education, and—more recently—in IR (Polyakov 2012). Its main theoretical purpose is to resolve the tension between structure and agency in the moment of practice, to suggest a relational ontology, and to rethink how power works (Go and N exon, this volume).

Today, international practice scholars are inspired by a range of thinkers, including—but certainly not limited to—Luc Boltanski, Pierre Bourdieu, Judith Butler, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, Anthony Giddens, Erving Goffman, Donna Harraway, Karin Knorr-Cetina, George Robert Mead, Annemarie Mol, and James C. Scott. While these scholars are very different, they share an inclination to pursue hidden political structures in the everyday, identifying contradictions in how people experience education, art, or war.

Social theorist Ted Schatzki defines practices as socially meaningful bundles of activities; they are "open-ended, spatially-temporally dispersed nexus of doings and sayings" (Schatzki 2012: 2). Practice scholars interpret human activity by parsing it into practices: stable and structured clusters of behaviors, communicative actions, and

accompanying bodily movements. Practice theories emphasize situated understanding and seek to unmask the apparent stability of social systems as contingent and, at least partly, agent-driven productions.

Among IR scholars, Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot's (2011: 4) definition is the most influential. Drawing on educational theorist Etienne Wenger's work, they write,

> Practices are competent performances. More precisely, practices are socially meaningful patterns of action, which, in being performed more or less competently, simultaneously embody, act out, and possible reify background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world.

Practices can thus be anything from multilateral negotiations to playing hockey or smuggling drugs. Such activities involve skills and techniques and can be performed better or worse in the eyes of other practitioners.[3]

Adler and Pouliot distinguish practices from two neighboring concepts: behavior and action. *Behavior* captures the material aspect of doing—for example, a person running down the street. The idea of *action* adds a layer of meaning at both the subjective (intentions and beliefs) and intersubjective (norms and identities) levels. A person running after another person, a thief, moves us from behavior to action. Finally, *practice* is when the person running after the thief is a police officer on duty; then the practice is catching a thief.

Adler and Pouliot delve less into how performativity shapes their definition; however, this is a central building block of practices. When repeated performances form a socially meaningful pattern, we arrive at practice.[4] This does not mean that all performances add up to practice. Indeed, a performance is not necessarily repeated and not necessarily patterned and regulated by (tacit) knowledge. This is crucial because performances also hold the key to change or even overthrow a particular social order. Performances may involve a "radical improvisational" character (Goddard et al. 2019: 312)—a theme I will return to below. The second observation is that performance always involves an audience, one that is not necessarily present but is anticipated or assumed.[5]

Methodologically, practice theories do not assume a priori that actors or subjects have specific interests or preferences. Practice scholars insist on keeping such questions open to empirical investigation. By implication, empirical granularity is not a methodological caprice but an analytical necessity. No one articulates this better than one of the key inspirations for international practice theories, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (2002, quoted in Pouliot 2016: 50):

> only by paying attention to the most trivial data, which other [approaches] willingly ignore in the name of abstraction and the scientific method, can we construct models that are empirically substantiated and amenable to formalization.

Practice theory is deeply *intersubjective* (see Epstein and Jackson, this volume). Put simply, the idea is not to read people's minds. Instead, the aim is to see what goes on between them (Pouliot 2016). Practice theory is less interested in individual motivations or intentions when analyzing the social and political; the fundamental building blocks of social life are not individuals but social relations. These social relations are often not spectacular, but it is the unfolding of everyday practices that produces our world's larger phenomena and social realities. As social theorist Henri Lefebvre (1987: 9) asks,

> Why should the study of the banal itself be banal? … Why wouldn't the concept of everydayness reveal the extraordinary in the ordinary?

The banal is as important to a practice lens as it was to Hannah Arendt. The political thinker famously identified "the banality of evil" as the best explanation for the atrocities committed by Adolph Eichmann, the Nazi operator responsible for organizing the transportation of millions of Jews, Poles, Slovenes, and Roma people to concentration camps during the Second World War. Arendt (1963) found Eichmann to be an ordinary, somewhat bland bureaucrat who, in her words, was "neither perverted nor sadistic" but "terrifyingly normal." He wanted to advance his career in the Nazi bureaucracy.

Practice theories remind us that not only peace diplomacy and climate activism but also crimes against humanity are carried out by people for a range of reasons and are not just a matter of political ideology. Anna Leander's (2010) work on private military companies and Jonathan Austin's (2016) research on torture point to these darker social practices. Practice theories provide answers to how normality is socially constructed (Adler-Nissen 2014). Instead of interpreting interactions as a one-way disciplining process, practice theories explore the negotiation of social order as a complex interactive process. For instance, given that stigma involves an "asymmetric power relationship," it may be resisted and coped with in various ways, leading to a complex interaction between the stigmatizer and the stigmatized. This interaction is crucial to "the success or failure of attempts to enforce discipline and define the 'normal' " (Adler-Nissen 2014: 152). Of course, this does not mean that dominated or weak actors are responsible for their own subordination. Still, it gives them agency and shows the productive outcomes of resistance and self-reflection in IR.

In sum, practice theories are relational. They zoom in on the trans- and international everyday practices that make up the bigger picture of world politics. They reject dualisms, in particular agency–structure distinctions. In doing so, they insist that power is embedded, embodied, and socially situated.

Identifying practices

Moving from theory to analysis: how do we know a practice when we see it? What empirical material can be studied? Practice researchers attempt to understand social phenomena by accessing the meanings participants assign to them, but where do they look for the meanings? Any place where practices are performed is a potential site of investigation. There has been a tendency to see fieldwork as the optimal way of applying practice theories because of the more immediate sense of practice provided by direct observations, followed by interviews as a second-best option (see Hopf 2022). However, this is a misunderstanding (see also Pouliot and Mérand 2012; Pouliot 2012). Practices can be read out of historical and contemporary visual, textual, oral, or sensual empirical materials. We can construe both explicit and tacit practices from draft documents (Adler-Nissen and Drieschova 2019), map-drawing (Branch 2017), buildings and architecture (Eggeling 2020), golf playing (Nair 2020b), social media posts (Adler-Nissen and Eggeling 2022), medieval coronation rituals (Drieschova 2022), or waltzing during the Congress of Vienna (Rösch 2021). In all these instances, contextual knowledge is essential.

Methodologically, practice scholars tend to pose two questions: first, what aspect of international practices might my empirical material reveal (and which elements slide into the background)? And second, how can I, from my particular position, interpret and understand (or misunderstand) this material? (For an excellent methodological elaboration, see Eggeling 2021). As such, data collection and analysis are both pragmatic *and* critical; we work with what is possible to access while critically reflecting on the limits of both the material and ourselves as the interpreters.

Situating the practice turn: Ordering and disordering perspectives

This is neither the time nor the place for a history of knowledge, but it is important to highlight that the practice turn has been promoted for theoretical, methodological, and normative reasons (see also Drieschova and Bueger 2022). These different motivations have resulted in different approaches. First, Iver B. Neumann's 2002 agenda-setting piece argued that discourse, norms, and material resources limited our theories of world politics, heralding the turn toward practice. Or as Pouliot (2008) later put it, IR suffered from a "representational bias," making us forget that, generally, people go through most of their day without thinking too much about it, suggesting we should pay attention to the "logic of practicality." Second, many have emphasized that the IR cannon lacks empirical sensitivity. As Neumann (2002: 628) wrote,

> This concern stems from an impatience with what could, perhaps unkindly, be called 'armchair analysis', by which I mean text-based analyses of global politics that are not complemented by different kinds of contextual data from the field, data that may illuminate how foreign policy and global politics are experienced as lived practices.

Third, many scholars have stressed the normative and ethical motivations for a practice turn. In the best-case scenario, practice-oriented research brings scholars closer to their research objects, enabling them to examine other people's lived experiences and how they construct, perform, or resist particular aspects of world politics (Adler-Nissen 2016a: 99). As Maren Hofius explains, the practice turn "foregrounds humans' experiential dimension as a source for the normative evaluation of practices" (Hofius 2021: 87; see also Ralph and Gifkins 2017).

These theoretical, empirical, and normative inclinations have long intellectual histories. Bueger and Gadinger (2015) as well as Schindler and Wille (2019) highlight pragmatism and critical theory as two key inspirations for the practice turn. However, a concern with everyday practices is also crucial for phenomenologists, post-structuralists, feminists, post-colonial thinkers, and political sociologists.

The ordering perspective on practice: Field, community, and network

In this section, I heuristically distinguish and grossly simplify "ordering" (how practices stabilize the world) and "disordering" (how practices destabilize the world) theories of practices (for the first iteration of this distinction, see Adler-Nissen 2016a). The added value of this distinction is that it foregrounds how practices influence IR and how power is performed. Studying the processes that produce and undermine social order is crucial to the practice turn. For practice theorists, social order is a collective achievement to which we all contribute. This means that there is always the possibility of a collapse of society if its norms and values are not constantly reaffirmed. The ordering and disordering perspectives are not mutually exclusive—one can look for disorder in an orderly community of practice. The difference lies in the starting point: some scholars explore how power struggles and contestation help constitute a particular order. Others study how practices destabilize and change order.

The "ordering" perspective is interested in how people become recognized as, for example (but not just), competent through classifications, distinctions, and categories of understanding. This happens, for instance, in social "fields" (Bourdieu 1977) or "comm unities of practice" (Wenger 1998).

According to Bourdieu's theory of practice, people take their own relative superior or subordinate position for granted. This manifests itself in bodily postures—ways of standing, sitting, looking, speaking, or walking (Bourdieu 1977: 15). The human body is crucial to people's practical engagements with the world. As Turner puts it, "The human body has to be constantly and systematically produced, sustained, and presented in everyday life and therefore the body is best regarded as a potentiality which is realized and actualized through a variety of social regulated activities or practices (Turner 1984: 24).

Bourdieu (1977) developed the notion of "habitus" to capture "the permanent internalization of the social order in the human body" (Eriksen and Nielsen 2001: 130),

while recognizing "the agent's practice as well as his or her capacity for invention and improvisation" (Bourdieu 1990: 13). These schemes of perception and thought are extremely general in their application, similar to dividing the world up into oppositions between male and female, east and west, past and future, top and bottom, left and right, etc. and also, at a deeper level, in the form of bodily postures, ways of standing, sitting, looking, speaking, or walking (Bourdieu 1977: 15).

Wenger is interested in how strong communities of practice "may foster interactions and relationships based on mutual respect and trust" (e.g. learning processes) (see also Bicchi 2022). Although Wenger stresses that "shared practices do not itself imply harmony or collaboration" (Wenger 1998: 85), he is less interested in exploring how communities of practice exclude ideas or groups of people (Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002: 28). Exclusion, stigmatization, and discrimination were not part of his vocabulary. However, this does not mean they are absent from the ordering approach to practices. There has been a recent surge in research focusing on contestation *within* communities of practice (e.g. Bremberg and Danielson 2022).

As Pierre Bourdieu and Erving Goffman remind us, exclusion and stigmatization are just as crucial for the construction of international order as socialization and learning processes (Adler-Nissen 2014). The stigmatization of individuals, collectives, or states helps construct "the normal" and serves to demarcate and uphold identities. Besides enriching structural approaches in IR, practice theories provide a deeper understanding of the preconditions for global governance and how these institutional structures work and are challenged in practice.

In sum, within IR, this "ordering" approach focuses on the daily activities of people in world politics, artifacts populating institutional sites, and participation in various communities of practices, hierarchies, and social fields (see Svendsen 2021). A few examples of this approach are Dan Nexon and Iver Neumann's (2018) field-theoretical account of international hegemony and empire, Didier Bigo's (2016) work on security practices and professionals, Vincent Pouliot's analysis of NATO–Russia cooperation (2010), and my own political sociology of diplomacy within the European Union (Adler-Nissen 2014).

The disordering approach to practices: Performance, creativity, resistance

The "disordering" approach to practices differs from the "ordering" perspective as it does not focus on the recognition of competent behavior or social capital. The disordering perspective insists that practices may not be meaningful or recognized by other practitioners. Criticizing the tendency to over-intellectualize the social, they insist that some action, including political action, is more ordinary than we assume. This is what gives it its emancipatory potential.[6] This approach often highlights subordinate and ordinary people and their experiences of broader power relationships (see Hobson and Seabrooke 2009).

Disordering perspectives embody the "everyday-life" concern with disciplinary logic. In practice, this entails an examination of how everyday life manifests itself in bodies, urban landscapes, consumption, and even boredom (Lefebvre 2002). By identifying the contradictions and tensions in how life is experienced by everyone, Lefebvre points to possibilities of resistance and improvisation. Others, in the "everyday-politics" tradition (see Scott 1985), are more interested in subtle forms of subaltern agency and defiance at the local level. "Everyday politics" are shaped by the subversive stories of ordinary people. In the field of IR, the disordering approach focuses on seemingly ordinary or subordinate people—nonelite groups, including the lower-middle and middle classes, migrant laborers, and diasporas whose lives are shaped by world politics. Meanwhile, the approach also explores how these groups simultaneously shape world politics "from below" in terms of their own political, economic, and social environment. McConnell's work concerning diplomatic outsiders in the European Union (EU) illustrates how resistance "provides glimpses of an alternative way through which polities can relate to one another" (McConell 2018: 378).

Theoretically, at the center of practice theories—whether ordering or disordering—is the problem of social order. Rather than seeing order as a product of hegemonic positions, the top-down, class, or other structures alone, social order must always be performed in practice. Performances reveal cracks in institutions and pave the way for studies of, for example, repertoires of statecraft (Goddard et al. 2019) or strategizing. This leaves space to study improvisation and social innovation, even in very established and formalized settings (Cornut 2018; Adler-Nissen and Eggeling 2022). Contrary to those linking instances of marginalization and discrimination to structural notions of "hegemony" or "empire" (Anghie 2005; Barkawi and Laffey 2002), practice theorists insist that "it takes two to tango." By foregrounding the relations and interactions between those who impose "normal" behavior and those perceived as transgressive, the weak or deviant may play a more critical role than hitherto acknowledged. This does not mean that they are responsible for their own subordination. Rather, as Zarakol (2014: 313) has pointed out in her critique of Finnemore and Sikkink's norm diffusion, "norm-internalization does not always lead to socialization, instead stigmatization drives many instances of both norm-compliance and norm-rejection by non-Western states."

Practice theories for whom and for what?

So far, we have focused on the analytical value of the practice turn, but what about its ability to critique or point to ways of changing world politics? Practice theories, I believe, hold significant critical potential. To appreciate this critical dimension, it is important to acknowledge that practice theory does not resemble what we usually call

critical theory within IR. Practice scholarship distances itself from many ideas that have inspired IR critical theory (e.g. Marxism, neo-Marxism, Gramscianism, neo-Gramscianism, and critical post-structuralism). As Austin and colleagues (2019: 9) write, practice scholars aim to be agnostic and to search for symmetry in their approach to "allies" and "antagonists":

> we seek to stay with the deeply troubled present of the world, recognizing—in any case—that though 'the situation [today] is critical' we ourselves still don't know which protagonist's cause to take up … This also means that it can be discomforting if companions lead us into fields outside our comfort zone and beyond our typical audiences.

As such, in contrast with much critical theory, practice scholarship is situated in careful empirical analysis and offers inductively constructed and tangible ways of making the world different. Another reason why practice theory might appear "uncritical" has to do with its own self-presentation in the IR landscape (see also Ringmar 2014). The practice turn provides a broader ontology for IR theory that appeals to both realists, liberals, and constructivists (Adler and Pouliot 2011: 5). As Pouliot and Cornut later put it, while "some scholars conceive of the practice approach as inherently critical, [f]or many scholars, though, practice theory is first and foremost an analytical framework that seeks to explain and understand the social world" (Pouliot and Cornut 2015: 302). These works, for strategic and pedagogical reasons, have downplayed critical currents in practice theory. I also summed up the practice turn for EU studies like this (2016a: 99):

> Practice theorists also disagree on the role of science in society … While it appears significant in terms of principles, in actual analysis, the difference may be less important because of the shared interest in what happens "on the ground" in apparently trivial moves, that turn out to be crucial for European integration.

Yet, as I shall argue here, recalibrating my own thoughts a bit, this "shared interest in what happens 'on the ground' " has a critical potential.

To tease out this potential, I will address two interlinked objections that have been raised against the practice turn in IR. The first, which I call *ontological*, alleges that practice theory overlooks aspects of world politics despite its claim to a broader ontology. The second is *epistemological-normative*, which sees practice theory as failing to recognize that "theory is always for *someone* and for some *purpose*" (Cox 1981: 128), shying away from addressing power, justice, and structural domination.

Ontological objections: The bigger picture and invisible subjects

The ontological objections against practice theory are perhaps the most prominent in IR scholarship. I will focus on two versions: the critical realist and the feminist. In the first

version, critical realists Jonathan Joseph and Milja Kurki (2018) have argued that practice theory's "flat ontology leads to misunderstandings of causes and processes which do not exist at 'observable' levels of reality" (Joseph and Kurki 2018: 83). By insisting on rich empirical data, practice theories overlook important and unobservable, yet causally significant, factors in world politics. As they conclude, "while practice theorists are entitled to adopt pragmatism (where knowledge is defined as what works), this should be openly defended, considered for its philosophical implications, and the consequences reflected on, politically" (Joseph and Kurki 2018: 84).

This ontological criticism, however, is based on a peculiar reading of practice theory. In fact, with its focus on embodied and unspoken performances, practice theory works against a representational view of science and fully accepts the idea that the world is layered and structured in ways that we, as scholars, may not always be able to access (see also Walter 2019). In an effort to divorce Pierre Bourdieu from the practice turn, Joseph and Kurki argue that he was, in fact, a critical realist, and that his "emphasis on limited understanding, unconscious reproduction, and misrecognition is consistent with the realist idea that social practices and habitus act as themes of mediation between structures and agents. It is through the unreflective practice or limited consciousness of agents in their routine activities that objective social structures are reproduced" (Joseph and Kurki 2018: 88).

The problem is not Joseph and Kurki's reading of Bourdieu, which I fully agree with, but how they interpret the ambition of practice theory. Practice theories do not reject structures or systems that they cannot observe directly but insist that the role of scholarship is to see how such structures or systems can be interpreted from practices. This is the phenomenological insistence on experience and sensing. The issue practice theory sometimes has with analyzing empirically unobservable *causal* or *constitutive mechanisms* is that such approaches risk being academically imperialist: scholars assume these mechanisms are there, and because the scholars also assume they are unobservable, they do not study them empirically (for a debate on internalist and externalist perceptions of practice, see Frost and Lechner 2016; Hofius 2020). Many practice theorists would insist that such "hidden" mechanisms will often have an expression of some nature, either in people's interactions, experiences, or material relations. Otherwise, they are not mechanisms but thought constructions.

The second ontological critique comes from feminist scholars. They criticize practice theory primarily for two reasons. First, as pointed out by Vivienne Jabri (2012), feminists such as Ann Tickner, Cynthia Enloe, and Katherine Moon have long focused on lived experience. They have rewritten IR in terms of everyday intimate relations that are structured by, and reproduce, gendered social relations. According to Wilcox (2017: 790), studying practices is nothing new.

This objection is merited. Much of the practice turn not only ignores relevant and important feminist and queer approaches but also works with a narrow ontology. Queer and feminist scholars insist on broadening the ontology of IR to include the perspective

of women, marginalized groups, and individuals more broadly. They often focus on everyday practices and the low politics of high politics. For example, Cynthia Enloe's pioneering work on nuclear scientists and militaries could be labeled practice theory, although it does not self-identify as such.[7]

The second objection by feminist IR scholars—a direct consequence of the first—is that practice theory could (and should) be more critical by focusing on "failed" practices rather than only focusing on competent practices. Much of the practice turn, indeed, makes the issue of "competence" central, even constitutive, of what a "practice" is.[8] That a focus on competence creates unnecessary limitations of the scope or ontology of practice theory was already pointed out in the powerful and critical conclusion in the edited volume *International Practices* (Adler and Pouliot 2011) by Duvall and Chowdhury. They gave the example of Nikita Khrushchev famously banging his shoe at the UN: illustrative of a subject whose actions are deemed "out of place." They, therefore, insist on giving incompetent practices a more prominent role (Duvall and Chowdhury 2011: 340). Relatedly, scholars have importantly paid attention to the racialized and gendered constructions of incompetence (Standfield 2022).

Yet, Wilcox rightly argues that the feminist objection goes beyond this insistence on including incompetence in the ontology. She argues, "But what then, of embodied performances that fail to meet these standards of competence in the first place? [A]re 'unsuccessful' or 'incompetent' practices being systematically marginalized and under-theorized?" (Wilcox 2017: 793). By excluding certain practices or bodies from ontologically "mattering", practice theory in IR reproduces existing hierarchies of disciplinary "competence" (Wilcox 2017). However, Wilcox takes the concept of competence to be more stable than most practice scholars do; it is the negotiation of the very meaning of competence that is often at the center of the analysis for most practice scholarship. Thus, a growing number of practice-oriented scholars are interested in exploring the marginal or "incompetent practices" (e.g. McConnell 2018; Loh and Heiskanen 2020; Standfield 2020). In addition, only the ordering-focused approach is as invested in competence, whereas the disordering approach, as we have seen, is less so.

Epistemological-normative objections: The (political) nature of academic knowledge

The epistemological and normative objections against the practice turn have to do with its pragmatist roots and inductive approach. Palan's critique of constructivism reflects this general objection to practice theory, namely that it "never enquires about the emergence of the subject-as-actor and shies away from questions of power, justice, distribution and so on" (Palan 2000: 585). By zooming in on practices, scholars forget to distance themselves from the knowledge they produce; they simply "go native." Palan's argument is that by focusing on the everyday, one is ignoring structure and thus sustaining it. Yet, to claim that practice theory is not engaged with structure, problems of

power, justice, and distribution is perhaps even odder than to say that it is individualistic. Practice theories are deeply involved with power, theoretically and empirically. Practice theorists insist that it is necessary to see various forms of dominance and structural inequalities as interactional processes, that is always co-constituted by the weak in some way or another. Forgetting their intellectual roots, constructivists have tended to bracket the processes through which the agent reacts and negotiates these norms (see Adler-Nissen 2016b).

More precisely, since practice theory is inclined to use induction, practice theory begins not with theoretically deducted hypotheses but with the stories that practitioners —or objects—of world politics tell. Only then does it make sense to formulate more general statements about the broader social patterns. In Pouliot's words, the methodology is oriented toward "the mutually constitutive dialectics between the social construction of knowledge and the construction of social reality" (Pouliot 2007: 359), seeking to bridge agency and structure without bracketing them.

As Hopf explains, "[t]he backbone of an interpretivist epistemology is phenomenology and induction" (Hopf 2002, quoted in Pouliot 2007: 368). It is precisely this epistemology that helped us explore everyday moves by ambassadors in the UN Security Council. The ambassadors described how the negotiations that led to the contentious international intervention in Libya in 2011 resulted from an intuitive sense of understanding among the NATO members. Notably, as one NATO ambassador explains, "[a]t some point you just know where the wind blows" (Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014: 18).

If so many things happen without anyone having a clearly designed plan from the beginning, how does intentional change happen? Recent scholarship specifies how change may be conceptualized in both evolutionary terms (Pouliot 2022) and in terms of repetition (Schäfer 2022). For many practice scholars, however, the answer is *reflexivity*. Reflection on knowledge production comes with a promise of insight and even emancipation for some of the key figures in practice theory (e.g. Bourdieu). Exploring conditions of change in and through practice is not the same as revealing a "false consciousness." Rather, it is a way of uncovering the practical knowledge and making it available not just for the scholar but for the world more broadly.

One example of how the idea of habit has been used in critical interventions in IR scholarship is Séverinne Autesseres's book *Peaceland* (2014). Drawing on fieldwork and interviews from the Congo, she points to how, despite good intentions, peace interventions fail to reach their full potential. The problem partly lies with the habitus, everyday practices and narratives of the expatriates who make up these missions—the inhabitants of "Peaceland." Recruitment practices favor thematic expertise over knowledge of local contexts and languages. Expatriates, not locals, fill peacebuilding organizations' managerial positions. Foreign peacebuilders are generally based in provincial capitals and socialize primarily with other expats; they follow strict security procedures and live in bunkerized quarters. Their analyses reflect simple narratives of

the causes, consequences, and solutions to violence, and their focus is on short-term solutions and quantifiable results. Autessere shows that these ways of acting and thinking prevent local authorship and ownership and encourage one-size-fits-all models over a nuanced understanding of what drives local violence. The book is not only an excellent example of an ordering approach to practices, where a myriad of practices form a larger order, but also demonstrates the critical potential of practice theory. Reflexivity is, therefore, also an important additional stage in scientific epistemology (see Leander 2011: 306–307).

Others are more skeptical concerning the potential of people making their own history by becoming self-reflexive (Hopf 2018). The practice turn has so far stressed the nonreflective side of social order. Still, according to scholars such as Hopf, it has not yet appreciated habit's role as a structural obstacle to social change (for a discussion of change, see Schindler and Wille 2015). In particular, it has not fully explored the relationship between habit, agency, rationality, and uncertainty in IR. Hopf explains how studying the logic of habit can reveal the social structures behind individuals unintentionally reproducing their own subordinate places in society—which is the aim of critical theory. In the future, practice theory should further study how these habits emerge, how they are maintained, and whose interests they serve.

Conclusion and perspectives

International practice scholarship expands our view of world politics. Practice theory offers an ontology beginning with practice as a unit of analysis. Three aspects of practice theory are worth highlighting: First, international practice scholarship is a relational approach that zooms in on everyday practices of the people and materials that make up the trans- and international arena (Sending, Pouliot, and Neumann 2015). Second, the practice turn seeks to overcome dualisms, including distinctions between structure and agency. Finally, practice scholarship insists that power has many different expressions. Power is contextual and embedded in particular practices.

Critiques of practice scholarship within IR have been too quickly subsumed under a focus on competence or elites. This has led to criticisms based on oversimplified conceptions of practice theory, overlooking its critical potential and the disordering approaches to practices. The focus on political or international (and Western) elites is not a theoretical necessity, but it has dominated recent scholarship. Now is the time for practice scholarship to uncover more of the unspoken rules guiding social interaction outside the West and at the margins of established circles of world politics (see Constantinou et al. 2021). To reveal the work that goes into taken-for-granted phenomena in world politics is to show that even decisions to go to war involve mundane situations of embarrassment and professional insecurities (Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014). Thereby practice theory pulls the "high politics" of IR down from its pedestal, making it trivial,

thus accessible for investigation and powerful critique. This is one of the significant gains of practice theory.

What makes practice theory apt for studying power relations is not an overarching normative agenda or one particular theoretical concept (e.g. gender, hegemony, discourse) but rather its ontology and methodology. By insisting that power is performed everywhere, it inevitably engages in an exploratory exercise that often demasks and reveals power where we did not assume it to be. Moreover, because it zooms in on the everyday, it makes change feasible. For some, this might not seem radical enough. For example, due to its emphasis on the conditions of international politics and knowledge, it has been argued that the reflexive dimension of practice theory "tends to subordinate 'theory' to 'epistemology' " and, therefore, hinders the scholar "from imagining a different society" (Karakayal 2004: 351). However, as a research program, practice theory stands solidly in its insistence on taking experiences and identities as they are produced in everyday IR seriously; they are embodied, yet interactional experiences.

Emerging themes: Bodies, emotions, materials, and technologies

International practice scholarship will inevitably branch out and develop its own niche discussions. However, the practice turn is now at a stage where it can, and should, also embark on new intellectual adventures benefiting IR as a whole. I see at least two themes emerging: (i) bodies and emotions and (ii) materials and technologies.

(i) Recently, performative and dramaturgy-inspired practice theory has contributed to debates within IR theory about emotions, the self, and the body. Practice theory's fundamental insight is that everyday interactions generate emotions, such as embarrassment, pride, and anger. George Hebert Mead's fundamental insight (picked up by Goffman) was that the self is social, not biological (Goffman 1967) and that the "looking glass self" generates emotions, such as embarrassment, pride, and anger. As Erving Goffman puts it, "[t]he self as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location … it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited" (Goffman 1967: 9).

From this perspective, emotions in world politics are not just psychologically or discursively constituted as affect or trauma; they emerge and are performed through everyday interaction. Within IR, research on emotions (Mattern 2011), emotional labor (Nair 2020a), misrecognition (Adler-Nissen and Zarakol 2021; Adler-Nissen and Tsinovoi 2019), and affect (Solomon and Steele 2017) have led to interesting new debates among practice scholars on how to locate and analyze emotions and what role they play in world politics. One fruitful avenue for this debate would be to further explore the many links with post-structuralist, gender, and feminist approaches in IR (e.g. Towns 2020; Standfield 2020, 2022; Jabri 2012). Relatedly, practice theory would also benefit

from cross-fertilization with studies of culture, including popular and military culture (Mälksoo 2021), rituals (Kustermans et al. 2022), and memory politics (Aalberts et al. 2020).

(ii) Materiality and technology: practice theory is now in close conversation with debates about materiality and technology in world politics. Materiality has always been an integrated aspect of definitions of practices, but within IR scholarship, it has been somewhat neglected. Recently, however, practice approaches have been in closer conversations with sociology of science and technology studies (STS) and actor-network theory (ANT) (e.g. Beueger 2013; Nexon and Pouliot 2013). Pioneering work by Jacqueline Best and William Walters (2013) showed the analytical value of "inscriptions", the various forms of visuals, devices, graphs, and computer programs through which actors seek to translate the messiness of the world—the laboratory, the battlefield, or the market—into usable, mobile knowledge. Today, most would argue that the practice theory landscape naturally includes material aspects, working, as some would say, with a "flat ontology" (Bueger and Gadinger 2015). We now see a rising focus on technologies shaping everyday practices and their "affordances" (Adler-Nissen and Drieschova 2019). How do technological revolutions play out in practice? Are they even revolutions? IR needs in-depth studies of emerging and institutionalized practices across the online/offline divide whether through social media platforms, algorithm constructions, or big tech regulation (Adler-Nissen and Eggeling 2022).

To sum up, practice theory helps IR scholars move toward a theoretically informed but deeply empirical International Political Sociology. In particular, its metaphoric models of social space, such as fields, communities, or networks, in which human beings embody different capitals, can pave the way for new analyses of otherwise understudied aspects of IR. Moreover, by vigorously examining the cracks in social order and the co-production of power, IR scholars are enabled to critically study the positions from which they and their colleagues speak.

Notes

1. I use "practices" to describe "social practices" in this chapter. All practices are social in some form or another. Kustermans (2016: 77) distinguishes between "practice"—as

   > all of our doings, the myriad of human behaviours, which is forever going on all at once. A second—practical knowledge—I define as my and your, and his and her skill at doing what we do. A third—practices—I define as the things that we do, the organized activities that we encounter and participate in.

2. Not unlike the struggles of young career scholars (see Holthaus 2020).
3. We may also reflect more on the *international* in the definition. International practices indicate that these practices occupy a space of political and social relations that trespass the boundaries of particular actors on the world stage (see Epstein and Jackson, this volume).
4. A performance is distinct from action as it requires an audience, real or imagined.
5. This is what distinguishes a performance from a habit (Hopf 2010). If a particular performance is repeated many times, it may become a habit. Yet—and this is crucial—not all repeated performances become habits, even if

repeated thousands of times. The performance of rituals involving sacralization of weapons is crucial to building credible deterrence practices in the NATO alliance, as Maria Mälksoo (2021) has shown.

6. Marginalization, exclusion, domination, and resistance have always been central concerns of symbolic interactionism, which is one of the sources of inspiration for practice theory (see Adler-Nissen 2016b).
7. Practice theory is beginning to recognize the pioneering work of feminists and queer scholars, including my book, which draws heavily on Cynthia Enloe's feminists approach and Cynthia Weber's work on simulating sovereignty (Adler-Nissen 2014).
8. Adler and Pouliot (2011) insist that "practices are competent performances" and that "practice is more or less competent in a socially meaningful and recognizable way." This is essential to how they understand practice because of the need for an audience to appraise the performance and its (in)competence.

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CHAPTER 9

REPERTOIRES

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INTRODUCTION

In 1878, Russia defeated the Ottoman Empire, and in the ensuing peace, attempted to redraw the map of Southeast Europe in its favor, annexing Bessarabia and rewarding its allies, Bulgaria and Montenegro, with significant territorial gains. The reaction of the five other great powers was swift: they insisted that the treaty be revised and called for a great power congress to negotiate a more equitable division of territory (MacKenzie 1994). Compare these events to what unfolded in 2014 when Russia formally annexed the Crimean Peninsula following a brief war with Ukraine. While a number of great powers condemned Russia's actions, they did so in much different ways: the United States and its European allies suspended Russia from the G8, introduced a resolution in the United Nations Security Council that reaffirmed the norm of territorial integrity, and imposed sweeping economic sanctions on Russian individuals and entities (Rosefielde 2016).

These two events, focused on similar territorial issues yet situated almost 150 years apart, highlight the importance of *repertoires*, which Tilly defines as "a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice" (1995: 41). While nineteenth-century interstate territorial disputes were largely adjudicated through realist repertoires of great power meetings and territorial compensation, similar disputes in the twenty-first century have been managed using liberal repertoires centered on international institutions, appeals to normative and legal principles, and the use of economic statecraft (Goddard, MacDonald, and Nexon 2019; MacDonald 2021). The advent of liberal repertoires has not guaranteed that territorial conflicts will be peaceful, of course, but it has provided novel scripts that actors can use when they make collective claims on one another. Political contention over territory remains a familiar feature of power politics, yet the practices states draw on in their diplomatic performances have shifted in profound ways.

This chapter surveys how International Relations theorists have adopted the concept of repertoires, originally developed by sociologists working in the contentious politics tradition, to understand a variety of activities in world politics ranging from the behavior of armed groups in civil wars, to the development of transnational social movements, to the diplomatic interactions of states. It argues that repertoires represent a

distinct and important type of performative practice, one that combines strategic and symbolic action together as part of collective claim-making. By providing actors with familiar scripts, repertoires help channel and structure contention in world politics in predictable directions. Yet, because actors deploy repertoires purposively as part of ongoing interactions, they have opportunities to innovate and improvise within these established scripts. In this way, repertoires highlight how much of the collective claim-making we observe in world politics combines the purposive and the routine, the strategic and the symbolic, the predictable and the unexpected. The concept of repertoires can thus help bridge the gap between rationalist and reflective approaches to strategic interaction.

The remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows. The second section defines what we mean by repertoires and describes how sociologists and political scientists have employed the concept. The third section highlights some of the research in world politics that has drawn on the repertoires concept, noting the wide variety of domains where these kinds of contentious performances occur. The fourth section describes some of the advantages of the repertoires concept, noting how it better captures the multifaceted and multilayered character of contentious claim-making. The final section identifies some of the ambiguities and limitations of the repertoires concept, highlighting opportunities for future research.

Defining repertoires

The contentious politics literature in sociology defines repertoires as the "arrays of contentious performances that are currently known and available within some set of political actors" (Tilly and Tarrow 2015: 49; cf. McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001: 49). Repertoires involve "not only what people *do* when they are engaged in conflict with others but what *they know how to do* and what others expect them to do" (Tarrow 1998: 39; cf. Tarrow 1993: 252). Jazz musicians learn a set of standards that they are expected to perform. Shakespearean actors master a common set of plays. Likewise, scholars of contentious politics argue that in any given time or place, actors choose from a set of performances to press their claims. In eighteenth-century Britain, actors would press their claims through mutinies, strikes, property destruction, food riots, and the burning of effigies. By the early nineteenth century, the repertoires of contention had shifted to the use of public meetings, the signing of petitions, and mass demonstrations (Tilly 1993, 1995).

Scholars of contentious politics were drawn to the concept of repertoires, in part because it helped bridge the gap between structural and individualistic accounts of social movements. Structural accounts reduced the emergence of social movements to deep tensions within a given society, such as relative deprivations between social groups (Gurr 1970). Individualistic accounts focused on collective action problems and

the ways in which movements could provide rational incentives for social protest (Lichbach 1998). The concept of repertoires, in contrast, provides a more relational, meso-level concept with which to understand social protest. Actors are making choices about how to challenge state authority but do so by drawing on scripts that derive their power from how they resonate with the broader social, cultural, and institutional context (Tilly 2003b).

In this way, repertoires are important because they help both "facilitate and channel" contentious politics (Tarrow 1998: 20). On the one hand, they allow for the mobilization of power. By resonating with certain actors, repertoires facilitate collective action across previously unconnected sites. Take any group of trained jazz musicians and assemble them on stage, and they can pull together a workable—perhaps even excellent—set without having rehearsed together beforehand. In early nineteenth-century Britain, the same popular assemblies that agitated to abolish the slave trade could be activated to oppose the Corn Laws, support Catholic emancipation, or push for parliamentary reform. No one had to invent these techniques out of whole cloth; a pre-existing script facilitated collective action (Tilly 2008: 11). On the other hand, repertoires also order and channel political mobilization onto predictable paths. The encore provides a routinized method for an audience to make demands on the performer. Similarly, social movements that hope to avoid state repression can use repertoires like public meetings or protest marches to bring attention to their grievances without seeming to threaten public order. In this way, the use of particular repertoires generates expectations about the kinds of behaviors one can expect from both sides in a particular contentious episode.

Repertoires are distinct from related concepts such as "instruments" or "means" in a number of crucial respects. First, the term "repertoires" captures the performative side of collective claim-making (cf. Baele and Balzacq 2021: 3). Actors interact with each other, constantly "figuring out how to shape the available routines to communicate the claims they are currently pursuing, and responding to other people's reactions as they make the claims" (Tilly 2008: 11–12). When actors use repertoires, they intend them to provoke a specific response from an opponent and choose accordingly. A jazz set should produce polite applause, not a mosh pit. A public meeting should lead to attention from town officials, not a police crackdown. A freedom of navigation patrol in the South China Seas should mobilize states party to the Law of the Sea and channel China's contestation into liberal institutions rather than outward military force.

Second, the term "repertoires" highlights the strategic side of collective claim-making. As Alimi emphasizes, it "conjures up the notion of a stock of special skills, plays, and activities with which members of a group are already familiar and from which they select specific ones" (Alimi 2015: 410). Actors use repertoires strategically and reflectively; they are, to borrow a phrase from Swidler, a "tool kit of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct 'strategies of action' " (Swidler 1986: 273). A philharmonic orchestra sequences its performances to attract new subscribers. A social

movement might time its marches to correspond with national or religious holidays. A state chooses a particular international forum because it expects the members will be sympathetic to its demands.

Third, the concept of repertoires allows for the possibility of improvisation. Repertoires, like all performances, evolve and innovate as the actors interact with the audience. As Tilly argues, the "theatrical metaphor calls attention to the clustered, learned, yet improvisational character of people's interactions as they make and receive each other's claims" (Tilly 2008: 14). A jazz ensemble might combine a traditional blues melody with Afro-Latin rhythms, creating a pleasing fusion. A protest movement might employ both nonviolent marches and sit-ins in ways that elicit broad public sympathy. A violent nonstate movement might fuse the familiar repertoire of the airplane hijacking with the novel one of the suicide attack in a way that surprises a potential target.

With its focus on socially meaningful scripts, repertoires bear a resemblance to "practices" (Adler and Pouliot 2011; Bigo 2011; Leander 2012). But much of practice theory has focused on the nonstrategic aspects of practices, such as their reproductive logics and the ways in which practice re-instantiates rules and norms (Mische 2012: 246–247). For this reason, the study of practices has often focused on the development of routines within international organizations, government bureaucracies, peacekeeping missions, and similar spaces (Mérand 2010; Neumann 2012; Adler-Nissen and Driesch ova 2019). While these practices constitute a significant amount of world politics, repertoires are concerned with the subset of practices that actors adopt when engaging in contentious claim-making, which tend to be more strategic, more interactive, and more contingent than those found in normal politics (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001: 5). Repertoires illustrate a key principle of relational theorizing: human agency matters, but it is always embedded within deeper social meanings and relationships (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Mische 2011).

The varieties of repertoires in world politics

Scholars of contentious politics have tended to focus on how repertoires shape interactions between states, on the one hand, and nonstate actors (particularly social movements), on the other (Tarrow 2015; Tilly and Tarrow 2015). When this approach has been ported into international politics, it has often been applied to the study of transnational movements (Tarrow 2001), whether in the form of advocacy networks (Ke ck and Sikkink 1998; Price 2003), anti-globalization movements (Della Porta and Tarro w 2005), violent nonstate groups (Adamson 2005; Krause and Milliken 2009), anti-basing activists (Yeo 2011), or right-wing political parties (Bob 2012). Death has focused on the repertoire of "disrupting the summit," where activists seek to influence international meetings such as the 2005 G8 summit or 2009 Copenhagen climate

conference, using a combination of both peaceful and violent means (Death 2015: 581). Repertoires are not just important to transnational movements; also transnational processes can help diffuse movement repertoires from one location to another. Chabot has traced how the Gandhian repertoire of nonviolent resistance diffused internationally, influencing civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King (Chabot 2004: 23). Casullo traces how the leaders of populist political movements draw on certain repertoires, such as the "patriotic military man" or "selfless businessman," and how these scripts have diffused around the world (Casullo 2019: 56–57; cf. Brubaker 2017).

More recently, International Relations scholars have applied the repertoire concept beyond social movements, looking at how repertoires can influence the "politics of collective mobilization in the context of the struggle for influence among political communities, broadly understood" (Goddard and Nexon, 2016: 5; cf. Musgrave and Nexon 2018: 621). A number of scholars have explored "repertoires of violence" in civil wars, which can include practices of kidnapping, assassinations, massacres, torture, sexual violence, and forced displacement (Wood 2009: 133; Ahram 2016; Hoover Green 2018: 6). Rather than simply classify rebel groups as either more or less discriminate in how they use violence, the repertoires concept has allowed scholars such as Wood to explore "variation in the forms of violence" across groups over time and space (Wood 2008: 541). Similarly, scholars have explored the varieties of ways in which states, particularly nondemocratic ones, can respond to contentious challengers. The growing literature on the "repertoires of repression" explores the dynamic interactions between state security forces and potential challengers to state authority (Chenoweth, Perkoski, and Kang 2017: 1962; Nugent 2020: 91; Bagozzi, Berliner, and Welch 2021: 1128). A similar literature on the "repertoires of rule" in empires explores the various techniques metropolitan officials can use to organize authority over their sizable and often diverse subject populations (Burbank and Cooper 2010: 6; MacDonald 2018; Mulich 2018: 703; MacKay 2019; Viksand 2020: 637–643).

Yet, repertoires are not only relevant to the study of relations between states and nonstate actors but also can be applied to the study of international diplomacy and statecraft (Lemke and Habegger 2018). McConnell has explored the importance of "repertoires of appropriate behavior" in international organizations, with a particular focus on how Indigenous peoples and stateless nations "seek to enact a diplomatic style that will be deemed appropriate to their subject position as both outsiders and aspirant diplomats" (McConnell 2018: 362). MacDonald has traced the development of "repertoires of liberal statecraft" at the Hague conferences, which included the use of voting and parliamentary rules, the codification of legal principles and institutions, and rhetorical appeals to public opinion and broader collective identities (MacDonald 2021: 649–650). In the context of international political economy, Jabko and Schmidt emphasize how European policymakers during the Eurozone crisis drew on existing "policy repertoires," appealing to notions of "austerity" and "governance" in innovative

and unexpected ways as they crafted their policy responses (Jabko an Schmidt 2021: 6; cf. Jabko 2019). Yet, repertoires are not just relevant to states in relatively placid diplomatic or economic contexts. Rowe emphasizes how the Russian and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) rivalry over Arctic governance was channeled into predictable pathways of both cooperation and competition, ranging from multilateral meetings to military exercises, diplomatic protests and cancellations, and so forth (Rowe 2020).

The upshot of these studies is that repertoires are commonplace in world politics. Whenever pairs of political communities make claims that bear on each other's interests, there is a possibility that these performances will reflect—and possibly refashion—existing repertoires. "When people make collective claims, they innovate within limits set by the repertoire already established for their place, tie, and pair," Tilly observes; at the same time, repertoires can "vary from place to place, time to time, and pair to pair" (Tilly 2008: 14–15). Some repertoires are systemic, applying to all states across the international system, while others are more localized, relevant only to particular regions or kinds of states. Haugevik and Sending highlight the development of a particular "Nordic repertoire" that has shaped how Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and Norway position themselves within the broader "rules-based international order" (Haugevik and Sending 2020). Some repertoires endure over time, while others fall into disuse because they come to be seen as either ineffective or illegitimate. Müller and Albert trace how certain "repertoires of balancing," especially those focused on "adversarial" practices such as arms racing, were questioned during the later decades of the Cold War as more "associational" practices, such as arms control, gained favor (Müller and Albert 2020: 111–112, 117).

The benefits of focusing on repertoires

Repertoires structure how actors in world politics make contentious claims on one another. Yet, they are more than just lists of "stuff actors tend to do" when interacting with one another. Rather, they illustrate how seemingly transgressive, disruptive, and even violent actions can draw on familiar and predictable scripts. As the theatrical metaphor underscores, much of the "action" in world politics centers on performances: public claim-making that draws on and repurposes modes of political action that are meaningful and resonate across multiple audiences. These scripts provide opportunities for actors to articulate their interests, signal their intentions, enact their identities, provoke their interlocutors, and elicit sympathy from third-party audiences.

There are a number of potential advantages to integrating the repertoires concept more widely into our studies of world politics. First, it provides a more fine-grained understanding of the kinds of scripts actors follow in contentious encounters. Studies of violent nonstate actors frequently focus on how these groups use lethal violence,

designating rebel organizations as either discriminate or indiscriminate in their targeting of civilians (cf. Balcells and Stanton 2021: 47–48). A repertoires approach allows scholars to explore the much more varied and nuanced ways armed actors press their claims, which can include nonlethal violence such as mutilation, rape, forced displacement, food control, and other actions (Gutiérrez-Sanín and Wood 2017: 23; Hoover Green 2018: 9–10). Similarly, it is tempting to deem certain power-political instruments, such as cyber capabilities, as either "offensive" versus "defensive" or "stabilizing" versus "destabilizing." Yet, as Egloff and Shires argue, cyber capabilities can be combined with existing logics of violence in a variety of ways, being used "instead of," "as part of," or "in addition to" other means (Egloff and Shires 2021: 6). How our understanding of these instruments evolves depends a great deal on how they are grafted onto, and intermixed with, existing power-political repertoires around interstate violence (Goddard, MacDonald, and Nexon 2019: 10–11). The repertoires concept emphasizes how performances invariably contain multiple components, which can be combined together in different sequences or patterns, allowing scholars to trace subtle differences across performances.

Second, the repertoires concept highlights the interplay between purposive strategic action and habitual norm-governed behavior in world politics. On the one hand, actors select repertoires strategically in response to the attitudes and behaviors of those they are seeking to influence (Tilly 2006: 35). Wood highlights how a rebel group "may add a particular form of violence to its repertoire in response to another group's engaging in that form, that is, it may 'mirror' the other's repertoire" (Wood 2009: 136). As an example of this process, Johnson highlights how transnational criminal organizations in Mexico appropriated state repertoires of repression and intimidation into their own governance practices (Johnson 2019: 20). On the other hand, actors favor certain repertoires because they are familiar or they fit with their sense of "who they are, what they are capable of doing, and what others can expect from them" (Haugevik and Sending 2020: 113; cf. Neumann and Sending 2021). Lindgren highlights how the Japanese foreign ministry, through its official development assistance "ODA-man" anime character, drew on familiar national stereotypes of "cute culture" to legitimate its foreign aid policies to both international and domestic audiences (Lindgren 2021: 634–635). A focus on repertoires questions the sharp distinction scholars have drawn between "the logic of consequences" and "the logic of appropriateness" (Sending 2002), highlighting the interplay of choice and habit in how actors choose their performances. It also underscores the potential power of going "off script." McConnell describes the moment when a young Yazidi activist, invited to the United Nations to testify about her escape from the Islamic State, used her allocated time to "read out a series of personal testimonies" and that by "not using technical terms, moderating emotions, or adhering to set formulas," her testimony "was read as authentic and legitimate" (McConnell 2018: 376).

Third, the repertoires concept underscores the existence of more incremental and improvisational pathways of change in world politics. Existing accounts of change in world politics frequently focus on moments of rupture, where dramatic events such as systemic wars upend power relationships and global norms in ways that produce change (e.g. Ikenberry 2001). Yet, one of the notable features of repertoires is how they evolve incrementally, through processes of improvisation, borrowing, layering, and other mechanisms (Tarrow 1993: 283; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001: 49; Tilly 2008: 207–208). MacDonald highlights how delegates at the 1899 and 1907 Hague conferences, through a process of experimentation and innovation, introduced novel "repertoires of liberal statecraft," anticipating the more dramatic changes that Woodrow Wilson would introduce following the First World War (MacDonald 2021: 649–650). Mulich traces how coastal polities in West Africa in the nineteenth century, caught between expanding European empires and Indigenous hinterland empires, embraced "altered repertoires" of collaboration and resistance as part of their "adaptive strategies" to these twin pressures (Mulich 2018: 709). Even change that appears driven by exogenous crises can be conditioned by endogenous shifts in repertoires. Jabko and Schmidt describe how long-standing shifts in repertoires surrounding "good governance" helped inform the European Union's response to the shock of the Eurozone crisis, including how they crafted emergency bail-outs and banking reforms (Jabko and Schmidt 2021: 6).

Some ambiguities in the repertoires concept

Existing scholarship on repertoires in world politics has largely focused on description, cataloging the multifaceted kinds of performances actors can engage in when making claims on one another across various domains. Given the breadth of this work, it is inevitable that certain ambiguities would emerge in how different scholars use the repertoires term and how they theorize about the origins and impacts of specific repertoires.

One area of ambiguity relates to the question of where repertoires come from. Some scholars see repertoires as primarily a discursive phenomenon and conceive of repertoires as "a cluster of discursive practices recognized as pertinent by a circle of actors who perform it in a variety of ways" (Jabko and Schmidt 2021: 6; cf. Jabko 2019). Repertoires in this formulation are primarily the product of rhetorical performances and particular speech acts. Others see repertoires as the product of identities, focusing on "how bundles of policy instruments take on an identity-defining quality" (Haugevik and Sending 2020: 111). Repertoires in this conception are, at their root, a means through which actors can enact and perform their collective understandings of themselves. Still others emphasize the connection between repertoires and social networks, tracing how actors' positions within a network provide them with

the material and symbolic resources required to adopt specific repertoires (Goddard 2018: 771; Mulich 2018: 702; Nexon 2019: 213). For Tilly, repertoires are embedded within "the existing web of social relations and understandings among parties to the interaction" (Tilly and Tarrow 2015: 44), which shape the set of repertoires available, as well as who has the capacity and authority to deploy them. Going forward, scholars need to explore the roots of repertoires, examining whether they tend to be shaped primarily by shifting discursive practices, identity commitments, or network positions among those who perform them (Ennis 1987: 523). Understanding the roots of repertoires has high stakes for our theoretical expectations: if repertoires are primarily discursive, then they might be accessible to a wide variety of actors. If repertoires are embedded in particular network positions, in contrast, then this might dramatically constrain who can effectually perform them.

A second area of ambiguity concerns variation across different kinds of repertoires. For the most part, International Relations theorists have focused primarily on identifying specific kinds of contentious performances rather than distinguishing among them. Yet, as Tilly notes, repertoires can vary "from non-existent to rigid, depending on the extent to which one experience with the making of collective claims affects the next experience" (Tilly 2008: 15). Strong repertoires tend to be highly predictable across time and space, perhaps even taking on characteristics of habits or rituals (Hopf 2010; Baele and Balzacq 2021), while weak repertoires tend to be more variable and idiosyncratic. Along the same lines, sociologists have explored the extent to which repertoires are "modular," accessible to a wide variety of actors across a wide range of social sites (Tarrow 1993: 294; Traugott 1995: 3). They have also examined what makes a repertoire transferable across different contentious contexts, highlighting various mechanisms of diffusion (Wada 2012). In the same vein, recent work has explored the interaction between repertoires and regimes, exploring how a state's political system might condition the kinds of repertoires that actors can adopt (Tilly 2003a, 2006, 2008: ch. 6). For the most part, International Relations theorists have not explored variations in the strength of repertoires or how repertoires spread, or whether democratic and authoritarian governments employ different kinds of repertoires (see, however, Goddard, MacDonald, and Nexon 2019: 8–9, 11–12; MacDonald 2021: 652–654). Unpacking variation across repertoires and delimiting the bounds of different repertoires is a fertile area for future research.

A third area of ambiguity concerns theorizing shifts in repertoires. While scholars accept that repertoires tend to change through interaction and improvisation, the conditions under which these kinds of changes can take place remain murky. Hoover Green speculates that the repertoires that shape wartime violence will change more quickly and dramatically than those of peacetime contention because "desperation or a lack of information can destroy deliberation, choice making, and strategy" (Hoover Green 2018: 6–7). In his careful study of Ukraine's 2014 revolution, Kudelia traces how a "violent vanguard" developed alongside and reinforced the activities of a "non-violent

base," suggesting one must disaggregate collective actors into their constituent parts to understand how repertoires evolve (Kudelia 2018: 515–516). More broadly, Chenoweth, Perkoski, and Kang note that the boundaries between violent and nonviolent repertoires are blurring, especially as states adopt techniques of "smart repression," and thus it might be more useful "to identify sequences, patterns, or groups of interactions, rather than focusing on particular events or isolated strategic interactions" (Chenoweth, Perkoski, and Kang 2017: 1962–1963). As scholars refine their techniques for measuring shifts in repertoires over time, whether through discourse or event data analysis, this can facilitate the development of more complete theories of change (Alimi 2015: 419; Tarrow 2015: 97).

A final area of ambiguity concerns the relationship between repertoires and the capacity of actors to challenge global hierarchies and upend established global power relationships. Those who have examined "repertoires of rule" within empires or other hierarchical relationships tend to emphasize the ways in which repertoires reinforce imbalances in relative power and authority. MacKay traces how various Chinese dynasties integrated and refashioned Confucian ideas within their governing repertoires to legitimate hierarchical control (MacKay 2019: 606–608). MacDonald explores how dominant states use repertoires of "divide and rule" to appropriate the authority of subordinate intermediaries and foster durable dependencies within imperial relationships (MacDonald 2018: 16–19). Other scholars, in contrast, have stressed the ways in which actors who want to challenge the status quo can exploit existing repertoires to do so. Lemke and Habegger describe how digital communication networks have allowed violent nonstate actors such as the Islamic State to access broader audiences, "forging new configurations and, therefore, making transgressive contention more likely" (Lemke and Habegger 2018: 312). Goddard explores how certain revisionist states exploit their positions within international institutions to "introduce novel repertoires of institutional order, proposing new rules and norms that challenge ideological foundations of the international system" (Goddard 2018: 771). While repertoires can play a profound and transformative role in challenging state power in the domestic sphere (Lawson 2019: 83–86), it remains an open question whether they provide similar pathways for state and nonstate actors to upend international orders, in part because of the prominent role that states play as gatekeepers and mediators of international order (Tarrow 2001).

Conclusion

Contentious performances are central to politics, whether domestic or international, and repertoires help provide meaning and structure to these episodes of collective claim-making. This chapter has explored how International Relations scholars have drawn on the literature in contentious politics to understand how repertoires can shape

performances across a wide range of actors and a variety of political contexts. Repertoires can influence interactions between violent nonstate movements and state authorities in civil wars. They can shape how diplomats frame their arguments to international assemblies. They can suggest ways for geopolitical rivals to contest one another's interests. Not all of these actors or political spaces are identical, to be sure. States are imbued with much different capacities and authorities than nonstate social movements. Yet, all actors in international politics want their political performances to be legible and impactful to potential audiences. Repertoires provide the toolkit for doing so, even as contentious performances themselves may feature improvisation and experimentation.

There is still much work to be done to explore how repertoires enable and constrain contentious performances in world politics. It remains unclear where repertoires come from and whether they are primarily discursive, a reflection of collective identities, or embedded within broader social networks. It is also unclear why repertoires vary in strength or how easy they are to transfer from one domain or political regime to another. While scholars agree that repertoires evolve through interactions and experimentation, we still lack a complete account of the conditions under which repertoires are most likely to change. Finally, and perhaps most consequentially from a normative perspective, it is an open question whether repertoires tend to reinforce power imbalances and inequalities in world politics or whether they provide pathways for contestation and transformation. To answer these questions, International Relations scholars need to pay more attention to how they measure repertoires across different domains and to trace how these repertoires evolve over time.

This chapter opened with a brief account of two territorial conflicts in Europe. These twin episodes highlight both the dramatic shift in the repertoires of statecraft from the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries and lingering questions about how repertoires work in world politics. In the nineteenth century, states used realist repertoires of great power management to moderate Russian revisionism in the Balkans and to preserve some semblance of balance among the great powers. Today, in contrast, liberal repertoires of multilateralism and legalism have failed to reverse Russia's annexation of Crimea, and as Cooley and Nexon have argued, Russia has proven adept at appropriating liberal repertoires to undermine opposition to their revisionist actions (Cooley and Nexon 2020: 158; cf. Goddard 2018: 793). Contemporary repertoires of statecraft appear both more formal and accessible yet less authoritative and constraining. Tracing how diplomatic repertoires have evolved in this way can enrich not only our understanding of how great powers engage in territorial competition in Europe but also the future of contentious performances in world politics more broadly.

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CHAPTER 10

PERFORMING INTERSUBJECTIVITY

SILVIJA JESTROVIC AND SHIRIN M. RAI

INTRODUCTION

In July 2021, Little Amal, a 3.5-meter tall puppet, started her journey from the Turkish–Syrian border across the European continent. She was the central protagonist of *The Walk*—a project in solidarity with all the migrant and refugee children forced to take such long and parlous journeys. The project was conceived by the internationally acclaimed UK theater company *Good Chance*, in collaboration with the world-famous South African *Handspring Puppet Company* and under the artistic directions of Amir Nizar Zuabi. However, this project was further supported by numerous local artists and cultural institutions along Little Amal's route through eight countries. At every destination, Little Amal was greeted by crowds, united in their solidarity for the plight of migrant and refugee children. Around the time little Amal reached Manchester in the United Kingdom—her final destination—in November 2021, two other events took place that informed our reading of her journey. The first was the migrants stuck in the freezing cold between the Polish and Belarusian border as part of the "hybrid war" orchestrated by Belarusian president Lukashenko to punish Poland for harboring his political opponents, pressuring the European Union into lifting sanctions on his country. The second was the tragedy on November 24, 2021 when nearly 30 people died trying to cross the English Channel as their makeshift boat sunk. British and French leaders were quick to trade accusations, which culminated in British Home Secretary, Priti Patel, being disinvited from the meeting with European interior ministers. Even quicker was the media spotlight that moved swiftly from the migrant deaths to yet another Brexit-framed British—French dispute. While in the symbolism of *The Walk*, the effigy-like figure of a migrant child was placed center stage, in actual political performance of migration and asylum (in both examples) migrant children and adults turned into mere political proxy —even their dead bodies were weaponized for political disputes, while no change has been made to actual laws and policies to make these journeys safer. These snippets of hostile International Relations playing out at borders and over migrant bodies, and their convivial and solidaristic imagining through the performance of *The Walk*, embody some of the key words and concepts this chapter explores—politics and performance, international and relational, and intersubjectivity. These vignettes also set

given categories in a dialectical relationship, enabling us to read politics through performance (and as performance) and performance as political and to understand the status of "international" and the working of its intersubjectivities on various levels.

The lead chapter in this section (Adler-Nissen) proposes the following key categories and definitions in framing the concept of intersubjectivity in International Relations: subject, relation, and action. The notion of the *subject* is defined as "an actor who is both constituted by the social structures within which it interacts with other actors and that in turn shapes these structures." Moreover, "the actors do not precede the process, they emerge from it. Consequently subjects, not individuals, lie at the heart of this approach: the subject is *constitutively* enmeshed in social relations and cannot be a priori extracted from them" (Adler-Nissen, this volume). Relation is understood in terms of "ties and processes that take place between actors, and as such form the raw social material out of which action arises," while the concept of action is defined through Hans Joas's (1997) broadly pragmatist approach as creative action. Through these conceptual parameters, the lead chapter outlines the term "intersubjectivity" as defining "the basic structure of the international understood as social, as opposed to a physical, system." In this contribution, we propose to expand and renegotiate these conceptual frameworks of intersubjectivity within the context of International Relations through the lens of the interdisciplinary sub-field of politics and performance.

Before we introduce our intervention to the given concepts, we need to lay out the basic principles of what we mean by performance and the co-constituent elements of 'politics and performance'. Thereafter, we will demonstrate how the politics and performance approach expands our understanding of subject, relation, and action as the key elements that shape intersubjectivity.

Politics and performance

Politics is understood here broadly as a contest of power, values, resources, and representations. Such contestations take place through different modes—bureaucratic, electoral, discursive, and ritualistic—on an everyday basis. Open conflict, sometimes violent, characterizes politics when contestations over values and resources spill out of the boundaries of institutional politics. Thus, at its core, politics as a discipline concerns who has power or authority over whom and how that power is institutionalized and contested; the different values that a range of communities and their members hold and pursue and which ones become dominant; who holds what resources in terms of, for example, wealth and status; and who speaks for whom (representation), and with what authority (legitimacy). Politics takes place in a variety of settings, formal and informal, routine and exceptional, institutional and personal—from legislatures, to international leaders' summit meetings, to mobilizations and actions on the streets, to trade union picket lines, to occupations of buildings or public sites, to gender and other

"status" relations (e.g. caste or race) negotiations and resistance within households and communities as well as political institutions and civil society spaces. To speak of "the political" is then to refer to the wide field of human and social relations in which power, values, and rituals are enacted and expressed. An important aspect of the political is to maintain order, which is where the state and its organs—legislature, executive, judiciary, and the police and military—enact and seek to sustain claims to legitimate authority (Weber 1991 [1921]). Politics is a spectrum, therefore, from the private to the public, the local to the global and the national to the international. While politics is action-oriented, performance is action-performed.

Performance is inherently, and on many levels, intersubjective—it necessitates subject/actor—whereby the term "actor" does not exclusively imply thespian but could equally mean a political actor (e.g. a political representative) or a quotidian actor (e.g. in everyday-life relations). The subject/actor is shaped through relationality and action. First, performance is understood as a "twice-behaved behavior" meaning that it is learnt behavior, whether it is an actor learning a part through a process of repetition, a politician rehearsing their public address, a member of parliament debating and voting on legislation, or a participant at a wedding ceremony. In other words, performance, whether on the theatrical or political stage, whether in political or everyday life, is that which unfolds within a set of conventions through which political negotiations unfold and also through which social interactions in everyday life take place. Understood as repeated or rehearsed behavior, performances are reflexive actions, events, or behaviors that are relational and self-conscious: to perform is to be aware of the act of doing something and to show doing it (McKenzie 2001; Schechner 2002; Carlson 2004; Balme 2014). Schechner notes that "just about anything can be studied 'as' performance" (Schechner 2002: 38). In principle, one could analyze a given performance through the frames of both "is" performance (e.g. a theater show or the opening ceremony of the Olympics) *and* "as" performance (i.e. underlying behaviors, relational patterns, and various social structures, from personal to institutional). Hence, not all performance is confined to individual subjects—institutions also "perform" (or constitute the setting, resources, or rationale for performance). Individual and collective actors make claims for and about themselves and others (Saward 2010), through ceremonies and rituals of the state, representative institutions, and informal politics (Rai 2010; Johnson and Rai 2014). They do so in particular spaces of everyday life, for example through political actions and protest as they unfold within politico-scapes in different contexts (Jestrovic 2004, 2013) or through mobilizing memories of (or forgetting) these performances (Gluhovic 2013).

Second, a defining feature of performances is that they are relational—between the performer(s) and the spectators or recipients of the act (Rai 2014). As Bertolt Brecht pointed out, the relationship between performer(s) and recipient is, above all, political. The transactional relationship between performance and audience—in the broadest sense of both categories and more often than not—plays out in the tension between

control (a desire for the ideal spectator, interlocutor, supporter, follower) and that which escapes control (through improvisation, interpretation, or interruption). In this "liminal" (Turner 1969) space between performers and audiences, there emerges a possibility for interaction, dialogue, and indeed for confrontation. Further, the lines between the performers and the audience can become blurred, often raising a range of aesthetic and ethical questions in the process. Indeed, political and ideological battles frequently play out through artistic performances and cultural forms, while political sites and actors take on theatrical dimensions and strategies. It is also the space within which various modes of translation take place—from linguistic to more discrete and subtextual translations of, for example, different cultural, social, and political codes.

Third, the relational character of performance involves mediating agents, which have taken various forms through the history of both theater and politics—from the chorus in Ancient Greek theater, epitomizing the internal audience and providing the connection with the community, to the roles of MPs as representatives, and finally to the modern media that not only shapes the reception of various kinds of actors and events but also carves out new performance sites.

Performing is a verb that emphasizes the effort, labor, intent, and process undertaken to make a performance. If deconstructing performance helps us to understand, for example, the flows of power underpinning politics, a focus on performing helps us reveal the materiality of power in a different way. "Doing"—be it "showing doing" or "doing" as in performance making—is at the heart of the act of performing and of understanding performance, both in its practical and in its conceptual sense. Performing as "doing" implies action or reiteration of actional patterns, unfolding in time and space, ranging from acts (as in stage acts) to activism (as in politics), to activity (as in everyday life). Building on Bourdieu's work (1991), we can see the labor of performing in its social frame; not everyone performs easily, comfortably, or well. Performing takes learning, rehearsing, and mobilizing resources (Rai 2014). A further aspect concerns the questions of accomplishment, of effects, and of affects—is the "doing" unfolding as planned or as rehearsed? Has it succeeded or failed? What has been its impact?

The subject

The lens of politics and performance, even from this very brief outline, allows us to further probe the constituent categories of intersubjectivity, starting with the category of subject in a relational constellation. The lead chapter quotes Descartes' "I think therefore I am"—as the "I" in the intersubjectivity. However, if the source of intersubjectivity is still "I," then how is this "I" relationally configured and reconfigured? What/who is the "not I," to echo the eponymous short play by Samuel Backett? At the other end of this relational configuration is the "Other"—as Julia Kristeva points out, "everything we consider our own is tainted with strangeness" (Kris

teva 1991: 183; see also Said 1978). She uses Freud's notion of the uncanny strangeness understood as something foreign, hidden within what is considered well known and our own. Kristeva delves into etymology, whereby the German word *unheimlich* ("uncanny") contains the word *Heim* ("home") in it. This leads us to suggest that the "I" of intersubjectivity is shaped by various Other(s), internalized and external. Sara Ahmad, for example, draws on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's idea of 'habitual body', which 'trails behind' in the performing of an action (Ahmed 2006: 130), to represent "whiteness in terms of a bodily attribute, a given that remains in the background unless it is faced with blackness" (Arias and Bryla 2018). Similarly, in her book, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (1987), Dorothy Smith argued that mainstream sociology objectified women and overlooked their everyday experiences as foundations for knowledge-making, making them the "Other." However, intersubjectivity is also shaped by a range of mediating functions, bodies, and acts that negotiate these relationships, which are not binary either, as the "Other" is both one and many. The story of self/other is then the story as much of politics as it is of disciplines that seek to explain it. Pushing against this othering, the Polish playwright Witold Gombrowicz, who happened to spend years in Argentinean and French exile, coined the term "inter-human church" (Gombrowicz 1970) to poetically describe relationality. We are all, according to Gombrowicz, members of the "inter-human church" and, as such, are denied the possibility of owing a true, authentic identity. Notwithstanding the use of the term "church," we read as a metaphor to mean that we are all created through the perception and discourse of others, and it is this changing context in which we find ourselves that necessitates an identity that is in constant flux within a complex web of hierarchy, power, and privilege. The intersubjectivity in this context, however, is neither poetic not purely individual but rather social and always political. Through this intersubjectivity in flux, both individual—as the Decartian "I"—and collective identities are shaped in various processes of subjectification, to extend and broadly interpret Alain Badiou's term, and to encompass various forms of socio-political becoming. Badiou stresses that his notion of the Subject "cannot be reduced to an individual" (Badiou 2010: 2), not even empirically. He offers a definition of the Subject in relation to the idea of truth as "a material existence of a truth in the making in a given world" (2010: 3):

> This is the moment when an individual declares that he or she can go beyond the bounds (of selfishness, competition, finitude …) set by individualism (or animality—they're one and the same thing). He or she can do so to the extent that, while remaining the individual that he or she is, he or she can also become an active part of a new Subject.

This process, that Badiou calls "subjectification," opens the possibility "for an individual to understand that his or her participation in a singular political process (his or her entry into the body of truth) is also, in a certain way a *historical decision*" (Badiou 2010: 3).

Butler, building on Foucault, offers the view on Subject in relation to, and as formed through, power. For her, thus, Subject is also inherent in the processes of subjection and resistance—both in terms of subordination "being subject" and agency (resistance to power) "being a subject" (Butler 1997). This dual process is viewed as the main undercurrent of social relations, and as for Foucault's discourses of power, for Butler too, this social relationality, is embodied. Alongside Butler, scholars including Deborah Youdell (2006) point out, in the contexts of education, that there is no Subject per se but that the subject emerges through various relations involved in its shaping—Subject is, we might say, a co-constitutive process rather than a fixed identity. The term *subjectivization* is introduced to encompass both subjectification (which is close to Badiou's meaning of the term) and subjection. However, these co-constituent processes manifest not only discursively and conceptually, but they also emerge as embodied, gestures, acts, and actions.

Action: Theatricality and performativity

As the lead chapter suggests, intersubjectivity is shaped though a range of actions—which we might add, along the lines of concepts of subjectification and subjectivization, is not a static set of socio-political relational positions but rather a dynamic process. The intersectionality of politics and performance offers further epistemological tools to understand how action unfolds as a key dimension of intersubjectivity. Two terms are particularly pertinent to this understanding—theatricality and performativity (Rai et al. 2021: 4–9).

Theatricality is used in a wide range of its meanings—with negative connotations when utilized to describe artificiality, inauthenticity, and dishonesty (ethical, political, artistic); and more positive ones (with richer conceptual implications) when invoked to describe artistry, artistic quality, aesthetic stylization, and divergence, along with a fund of (re)presentational strategies, devices, and methods. One way or another, theatricality is that which unfolds through scripts, through embodied and gestural patterns and codifications; through repetitions, rehearsals, and re-performances. Patrice Pavis defines theatricality as 'the specific enunciation, the movement of words, the dual nature of enunciator (character/actor), and his utterances, the artificiality of performance (representation)" (Pavis 1998: 395). Thus, theatricality can be viewed as a special kind of stylization emphasizing the aesthetic and self-referential dimensions of performance. Theatricality also displays extra-textual (visual and auditory) aspects; Roland Barthes (1972: 26) argues that theatricality is

> theater-minus-text, it is a density of signs and sensations built up on stage starting from the written argument; it is that ecumenical perception of sensuous artifice—gesture, tone, distance, substance, light—which submerges the text beneath the profusion of its external language.

Theatricality is also a historical and socially rooted phenomenon that combines *rhetorical* grammar with *authenticating* conventions (Burns 1973), which have been, for example, also mobilized as "technique of theatricalizing the colonized people and places" (Skwirblies 2021: 27). Therefore, for us, the notion of theatricality is neither bound solely to theater nor to the realm of arts and culture—it stretches to and underpins social relations, as Goffman has famously identified, and penetrates the socio-political and everyday life (the two, as noted above, often being intrinsically interlinked). Action/doing in the political arena also unfolds within a certain set of codes, rituals, and conventions. As such, "political scripts take different forms—declarations by the state, recognisable norms that are performed in different contexts differently, claims of authority, accountability and legitimacy" (Rai et al. 2021). Scripts are thus written into our politics and political performance through ceremony and ritual, declarations, negotiations, leadership styles, constitutional and legal frameworks, claims, and consequences.

To offer an extra-theatrical example that illustrates what we mean by theatricality in the context of politics and performance, let us take an example of a United Nations (UN) summit with its numerous, ordered events that unfold along given trajectories and conventions—starting with the semiotic of the special delineation, the roles the participants in the meeting have, the relationality unfolding according to the pre-established agenda, the role of translation and mediation, and so on. Some of these elements are functional and operational, others are ritualistic and symbolic, or a combination of both—starting from the building itself, the stage upon and within which the summit unfolds. The meeting place is often an imposing edifice where complex political issues of international significance are deliberated, but which is also a ritualistic space, where the coming together of the world's leaders has been continuously enacted in the symbolic shape of the circle—of wholeness, of equality, and of dialogue. This, as we outline below, might of course keep out of view, out of sight and sound, the mobilization of bodies, of noise as protestors take to the streets in opposition to the purpose of the summit. The relationality between the two is visible and invisible but very much present, shaping the politics that surrounds and emerges from the summit.

Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja remind us of different socio-political dimensions of space—the symbolic, the pragmatic, and the lived—all interlinked and shaped through some form of action/doing. Soja (1996), taking his cue from both Foucault and Lefebvre, points out that heterotopic space (Foucault) is indeed made/produced through action—whether the acting is physical, conceptual, or symbolic. He works against binaries of Perceived Space (directly experienced world, e.g. the UN as a site where key socio-political issues of international significance are deliberated) and Conceived Space (subjective, 'imagined' space, e.g. the symbolic dimension of the UN as a concept but also as a site), and draws from Lefebvre's concept of Lived Space—which operates between these dualities of subjective and objective—to introduce his version

of the concept, which he called *Thirdspace*. Soja defines it as a "strategic meeting place for fostering collective political action against all forms of human oppression" (1996: 22) but also as a "distinctive way of looking at, interpreting, and acting to change the spatiality of human life" (1996: 21). The concept points to the inseparability of the historical, the social, and the spatial, and promotes a "third-possibility" dialectics that does not culminate in synthesis but seeks instead "to disorder, deconstruct and tentatively reconstruct the entire dialectical sequence and its logic" (1996: 21). Soja's ThirdSpace is an open and inclusive space of action and intervention—it is the where and how of radical performance activity.[1] In the context of our UN example, the ThirdSpace category comes to being in moments such as when, in 2019, climate change protesters barred from the UN talks staged a demonstration in front of the iconic building where the talks were held. We might also understand the ThirdSpace as a site of some form of "creative action"—where improvisation and the unpredictable could take place and whereby the ritualistic wholeness of the circle and scripted actions of political deliberation and negotiations become temporarily disturbed to a lesser or greater extent—to generate a liminal space and moment with potential for change. However, Doreen Massey criticizes the underplaying of gender and race in Soja's (and David Harvey's) work in favor of class, pointing to the importance of intersectional intersubjectivity: "consigning these groups to parentheses after the supposed universal of the white, male, heterosexual vitiates the projects [they] undertake" (Massey 1991: 31). This critique opens new spaces and possibilities of how bodies could inhabit, cocreate, and shift ThirdSpace dynamics through which performativity takes place.

Performativity in both art and life cuts through that which is immanently theatrical and that which escapes theatricalization (Rai et al. 2021). While theatricality is always in need of asserting itself, at least partially, as an aesthetic/formal quality, performativity inhabits a much broader realm. Performativity both reinforces and limits the potential of theatricalization (Jestrovic 2006). Josette Féral explains the distinction and co-dependence of these two categories (Féral 2002: 5):

> Theatricality does not exist as a pure form, nor does performativity. If "pure theatricality" existed, it would be a repetitive, dead form of art, where all signs would be identifiable, decidable and meaningful—a kind of "museum play" that would recreate old art forms as museum pieces. Not as living art forms. … On the other hand, a performance based on performativity alone would be carried away by the action itself, without any possibility for the spectator to understand it as a meaningful process linked to signs, codes or references. If it is easier to imagine such performances (sport events, car races, fireworks), we know also that this performativity is meaningless if not enriched by theatricality.

Performativity thus concerns the consequences of performance as well as its unfolding. John L. Austin (1975) captures how acts are performed through words—or, how words contain actions. The marriage vow is Austin's now famous example of a performative utterance whereby "I do" both creates the marriage and implies potentially a range of consequences including changes of legal (and, in some cases, social) status. However,

as Ahmed points out, not all performative utterances "do things"—institutions often "regret" without regretting; individuals say sorry, without meaning it; Ahmed calls this the nonperformativity and suggests that this is particularly visible in the (non)performance of antiracism.

Performativity is not only language-based but also embodied. For example, Butler links the concept to gender construction, arguing that "the body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised and consolidated through time" (Butler 1990: 274). Butler uses the term "performativity" to designate the effects that performances can achieve, create, reinforce, or prompt—"that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains" (Butler 1993). For Butler, there is no full escape from "the prison house of" performativity (to paraphrase Jameson 1972). Nevertheless, performativity can also be subversive, especially in combination with theatricality. Butler (1990) herself writes about *subversive body acts* that lay the construction of gender bare—drag performances, for example, where (through exaggerated theatricality) the regulating power of gender performativity comes to be unmasked. Another example is that of a group of Manipuri women in India who staged a "naked protest" in opposition to the Indian Army's rape and murder of a 24-year-old woman. Writing about this protest, Madhok notes, "The naked protest by these mostly middle aged, married and 'respectable' women issuing an open call to the military to rape them draws attention to the corporeal nature of coloniality and colonial occupation but also to the body as the site of political protest in the face of exceptional law" (Madhok 2018: 6). Embodied performativity can be a powerful act of rebellion, even as it is of state power.

Performativity is also unpredictable, as stage performances demonstrate. It is through performativity—of scripts, sites, bodies, voices, gestures, and affects— that a given frame comes to be established and perhaps regulated (see Rai 2014). Yet, it is also through the performativity of these elements that glitches, failures, subversions, improvisations, and breakages of the frame become possible. Performativity realizes the reiterative power of performance, but at the same time, it carries the potential for the repetition to be broken and for a new scenario to emerge and be imposed in its stead. Thus, performativity is the realization of two oppositional forces of performance—that which has been established and controlled through repetition and reiteration and that which "spills over," cracks the frame, or escapes control. This is a meaning-making process whereby form (theatricality) becomes action (performativity), resulting in un/predictable consequences.

In brief—in analyzing *performances*, we explore the "who and what" of politics and performance; in analyzing *performing/theatricality*, we study the "how"; in analyzing *performativity*, we examine the effects and outcomes of performance. They are further complicated by factors such as spatio-temporal contexts and social relations, identities (of both performers and audiences), bodies, voices, gestural repertoires, scripts, and affective registers. All these factors make the complex yet empirical and conceptual

dimensions of intersubjectivity. In performance analysis (regardless of whether the performance is of artistic, political, or everyday nature), all these factors are taken into account, as well as the context (social, political, cultural, historical) within which they emerge. Finally, the context/perspective of the one who analyzes performances needs to be foregrounded in our hermeneutics, which points to the intersubjective dimension of our epistemologies, problematizing the assumption of the objective eye of the beholder.

Agonism of international/relational

The social intersubjectivity underlying the context of International Relations is both performative and embodied. We do not need to search far and wide to see and understand these aspects—a brief glance at a European Union (EU) as a playing field wherein inter-subjectivity unfolds in the international relation contexts offers a range of spatio/temporal and embodied dimension—including the symbolic and empirical concept of the Union—a political entity that unfolds spatially in a variety of ways—through its institutions, legislations, economic platforms, currency, funding initiatives, culture (e.g. European City of Culture), bordering practices, and so on. Through politics of inclusion and exclusion—from countries applying to be included (e.g. those on its political margin, such as Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania)—to individuals (e.g. migrant workers within the Union to refugees and asylum seekers from elsewhere) the "Other" is, in one form or another, both internalized and lurking at the gates of Fortress Europe, shaping the intersubjectivity of this international political entity institutionally, linguistically, culturally, spatially, and physically. The theatricality and performativity of these intersubjectivities in flux becomes most apparent in moments of rupture—in the refugee bodies washed up on the shores of Mediterranean beaches, the razor-blade barbed wire at the Hungarian border with Serbia, and the "hostile environment policy" of the United Kingdom. The bodies of others challenge IR—how to think of borders when we witness on television (with appropriate warnings to our sensibilities) migrant women, men, and children drowning in the Mediterranean, waters that are heavily policed, while the EU discusses whether humanitarianism or further securitization of its borders should be its primary goal; whether the European borders should stretch beyond its borders to North Africa—to create new borders in this post-colonial wonderland where the "Other" states police other bodies in other lands; where security is bought by creating a no-man's land in Africa (Vaughan-Williams 2017). The images of detention centers—also borders of sorts—containing black bodies proliferate; newspapers tell stories of "increasing infiltration" of Europe as well as the tragic consequences of these. New laws and new technologies of power are brought into force and performed to give states power to regulate these porous and shifting borders—all the time raising anxieties of its citizens and re/shaping their politics as they go about their everyday lives. Securitization of the "Other" mirrors the securitized self. Performative

intersubjectivities on the EU stage also unfolded in the post-truth theatricality of the Brexit campaign in the United Kingdom and the subsequent negotiation on the United Kingdom's terms of leaving, one of which has been the vexed issue of where to stop these alien bodies (which are insistently called migrants rather than refugees) before they get to Britain, and who would do this job after its exit from the EU.

Following from this, the idea of the international itself—as both an adjective and as way of describing being/doing in the global arena—is also inevitably intersubjective. It presupposes sharing and exchanging goods, ideas, resources, as well as sharing space and time in various ways that make these categories porous and transient. At the same time, behind the veneer of the global and international, we identify stark inequalities on various levels, for example resources, access, opportunities, mobilities, etc. Moreover, the power dynamics remains unequal, the dichotomies of center and margin, even when challenged, always get to be reinstituted. While none of this is new, the analogy of what the international means in performance and politics is interesting. For example, while it is almost impossible to think about performance and cultural practices as closed and self-contained within the boundaries of national cultures (even when claims to ethnic/cultural authenticity are vehemently made), it is only recently that performance studies and international studies have focused on critiques of the Western-centric disciplinary epistemologies—voices of scholars from the Global South, for example, as well as Indigenous knowledge systems, have enriched and been a productive challenge to previously held positions. Mixing, remixing, borrowing, and cross-fertilization have been key to cultural vitality—in other words, there is a growing recognition that no national culture is without foreign traces and influences. Behind these relations in some contexts, we find coexistence, communal diversity, and solidarity in mobilizing the international aspect, while in others, oppression, violence, and weaponization of culture have been the uncanny double of the globalized world.

Even on the most direct level in the field of performing arts—international productions and intercultural endeavors often prove more complicated and fraught than the initial utopian vision of internationalism and global performance. The makers, protagonists, and stakeholders are often faced with unequal funding and resources, the artistic vision of the iconic Western director dominates the frame even if the material and the team come from all over the world (Peter Brook's legendary, yet controversial staging of "Mahabharata" ' is a case in point). Likewise, on an international project, the co-producer with more money would often be the one with the upper hand in all aspects of decision-making. This might almost read as a simplified version (or even a metaphor) of how international relation(ship)s unfold in other arenas. In performance as well as in politics, there are always tensions on some level, often teetering between conflict and resolution. What performance practices have done well, and where they could perhaps serve as work sites for negotiating intersubjectivity in a broader international arena, is in turning antagonisms into agonisms (to echo Chantelle Mouffe). In the vocabulary of drama, antagonist is the adversary, the enemy of the hero, while

"agon"—arguably, at the heart of every dramatic structure—means conflict, struggle, which carries within it the potential for a resolution. Returning to our opening example of Little Amal and the ill-fated migrants, in the former, we find a symbolic gesture within the framework of international performance unfolding as public conviviality that crosses borders; in the latter, we see how intersubjectivity plays out antagonistically in International Relations concerning border politics and policing. Here, the actual migrants remain within the harsh, often deadly, reality of European asylum laws and regulation. The utopian artistic gesture of performances like *The Walk* seldom reaches them. When we look at performance in an international context and as intrinsically intersubjective in nature, at its most effective we see a symbiosis of the aesthetic and the political, neither entirely antagonistic nor purely convivial, but agonistic—struggling through both antagonism and conviviality to find another way; this is the missing link between the embodied migrants turned victims of the antagonistic international border politics and Little Amal walking through the bubble of international conviviality.

Modes of intersubjectivity: Convivial, antagonistic, and solidaristic

To demonstrate further the various aspects and modes of intersubjectivity as a social action/doing through the interdisciplinary categories of politics and performance, we will briefly examine a set of examples from both the political and the artistic/cultural arena. The latter is taken here as a kind of synecdoche in the way dramatist Bertolt Brecht understood scenic synecdoche—whereby a semiotically significant scenic element stands as a microcosm for a range of socio-political relations. Moreover, placing socio-political and cultural/artistic examples side by side attests to the intrinsic connections among the political, the cultural, and the international sphere. In what follows, we outline three categories of social intersubjectivity—*the convivial*, *the antagonistic*, and *the solidaristic*.

Convivial intersubjectivities

"Relational aesthetics" is a term coined by art critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud and defined as "A set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space" (Bourriaud 1998). It is one of the forms that, in a performative mode, shows how intersubjectivity becomes physicalized; how it occupies time and space; and how it frames different bodies, voices, and gestures. The key figure that inspired the coining of the term and aesthetic concept is the artist Rirkrit Tiravanija and his work *Untitled (Free)*. In this performative installation, Tiravanija transforms an

art gallery storeroom and office into a performance space—the artwork comprised of cooking Asian food, the audience participating in the process, eating with the artists and having a conversation. Acts of participation of audience and artist(s) in the making of the work/event is key to this aesthetic even though it has been often criticized for creating temporary, and even false, communal conviviality.

Artist Carmen Wong has created a project called *Breakfast Elsewhere* in the mode of relational aesthetics as part of her practice. The *Breakfast* was taking place in the evening, in the studio of an educational institution—the Theatre Studies Department at Warwick University (the project has been done in other places, including people's kitchens, however). We, a diverse group of participants, were asked to cook together. After we fished out the ingredients from a grain-filled suitcase, we made a Middle Eastern breakfast of hummus and pita. The recipe came from a Syrian immigrant living in Coventry. The instructions were pre-recorded and communicated to a volunteer through headphones, who then shared them with all of us. The originator of the recipe was observing and then joined us as we sat on the floor to drink tea, eat, talk, and listen to one another. There were no stories of hardship, or gestures of compassion, no token *Others* either. Our *Breakfast Elsewhere* unfolded as a ritual of simple communal intimacy, of slowness, and of listening. In Wong's project, there was no overt agenda to either empower the marginalized or to teach hospitality, and neither was there any overt declaration of solidarity. Yet, *Breakfast Elsewhere* is a prime example of the *aesthetic of solidarity* in carving out time and space to do something simple together, yet in a somewhat unusual way—to perform the everyday in a not-so-everyday setting.

Similarly, feminist acts of *loitering*, like Wong's experiments in food-making and community, could both be seen as *thin acts* that constitute the *aesthetics of solidarity*. Take, for example, Phadke, Khan, and Ranade's work on gendered loitering (2011). They argue that the everyday 'transgressions' that stem from women being seen as 'out of place', such as occupying spaces outside of the household can result in forms of violent disciplining. Focus of much of feminist analysis of work overlook the issue of leisure in public spaces, as gendered violence continues to be an urgent issue. Studying women "taking their ease" in public parks, on pavements and beachfronts, they examine leisure together with respectability, stigma, and also solidarity among women as they occupy new social spaces—in other words, loitering (or "time pass")—as an everyday feminist response not just to issues of access to public space/right to the city but also through purposeless yet pleasurable engagement in and with public space—and one that can be positioned also as a critique of the hyper-temporalities of late capitalism (Elias and Rai 2018). Elias and Rai argue that the role of a more "purposeful" occupation of space can be an exercise of agency and as a resistance strategy—be it in terms of feminist performative activism such as "Take Back the Night," "Slut Walk," "Why Loiter?," or "Hollaback!," to undermine the violent policing of female bodies in public spaces, or in terms of the politicization of private spaces via housing occupations and other, oftentimes female-led, collective activism around slum/public housing evictions.

It also challenges gendered regimes of women's work in the household—to spend time on herself undermines the narratives of a "good housewife" engaged in domestic and care labor.

Antagonistic intersubjectivities

The everyday itself, of course, is not an innocent concept—it has its own history and landscape, its literary and research hinterland, its own vocabulary. The ambiguity and contradictions of politics can become visible in different ways and take different forms if we look at/for them not through a narrow lens of interstate relations, international and state institutions, and ideologies but through the aesthetic, the marginal, and the quotidian. Let us take two images that we have often seen on our television screens—the grief over dead (Western) soldiers in wars and the grieving over the slain in the Middle East. What we can note in these images is the packaged mobilization of grief: forms of grieving are re-presented in the binary frames of the modern and traditional, civilized and uncivil, order and disorder. Representation of these images underscore different modes of grieving that the Westernized world valorizes and recognizes—as "us" and as the "Other," The lack of decorum, the chaos surrounding the dead and the grieving, the uncontained performance of grief of the "Other" is juxtaposed with the quiet, highly choreographed, and commodified mobilization of grief—the dress, the flowers, the cortege all supporting a cast of women left behind by heroes. This is, of course, not to suggest that all those concerned did not experience grief; rather, it underlines how even the most pain-filled spaces—grieving for those lost to wars in this case—are being rolled into the narration of politics through a media machine embedded in the state–military complex.

In a performance register, Christoph Schlingesief's intervention, *Auslander Raus!* (*Foreigners Out!*) (2006 [2000]), staged in Vienna and commissioned by Wiener Festwochen, opens up a powerful examination of antagonistic intersubjectivities. In her work on participation in art that charts the theoretical framework of ways in which art has often attempted to counter the passivity of the spectator foregrounding the relational, intersubjective, and participatory aspects of performing and spectating, Claire Bishop (2004) argues against the above-mentioned relational esthetics as formulated by Bourriaud. According to Bishop, he fails to sufficiently address the nature of relational aesthetics and the specific conditions that determine the content and quality of the participatory relations. As a result, his concept often idealizes communities, turning relationality into a default virtue, obscuring political relations and inequalities. Instead, Bishop draws from Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, who maintain that antagonism is essential for democracy, to propose *relational antagonism* as a mode of participation and subjectivity, which stands in opposition to communal conviviality and has a potential to challenge the status quo. Schlingesief's intervention, placing a group of asylum seekers in a container in the city center, is a model example of *relational*

antagonism. Although very little was revealed about the participants outside the context of Schlingesief's reality show, they were not actors, and their immigration status was presumably real. This project was a reaction to a series of electoral successes of Austria's far-right Freedom Party and its leader, Joerg Haider, whose strong anti-immigration views defined his campaign for government (1999/2000). One of his electoral posters featured the overtly xenophobic term *überfremdung*, previously employed by the Nazis, to describe the country overrun with foreigners. This move toward the far right prompted the European Union to put Austria under diplomatic sanctions as a way of voicing its outrage not only over Freedom Party's exclusionist approach but also over what that party represents with its checkered history including strong Nazi ties.

For one week, Schlingesief kept his asylum seekers confined in a container that represented a detention center but also a concentration camp, giving it a strong participatory framework. It stood in the heart of the city in the Herbert von Karajan square in front of the *Staadsoper*, making a stark contrast to the opera building's architectural grandeur. On the top of the container a huge banner proclaimed "AUSLÄNDER RAUS!" The last one to remain was promised a monetary prize and marriage to an Austrian citizen to get immigration papers. Schlingesief acted as a kind of master of ceremonies of the event, giving provocative, sometimes contradictory speeches and engaging in debates with the public that, in the course of the event, grew increasingly heated, even physical, in some instances. Schlingesief deliberately obscured the relationship between performance and reality, pushing the limits of both. Intersubjectivity as a systemic social phenomena was explored in performative and also embodied ways, here problematizing the relationship between the subject and the "Other." It also performed Derrida's paradox of hospitality (which is an intersubjective category rather than an individual one in the migration and asylum context) (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000: 15):

> the foreigner is first of all foreign to the legal language in which the duty of hospitality is formulated, the right to asylum, its limits, norms, policing, etc. He has to ask for hospitality in a language which by definition is not his own, the one imposed on him by the master of the house, the host, the king, the lord, the authorities, the nation, the State, the father, etc. This personage imposes on him translation into their own language, and that's the first act of violence.

The participation in *Auslander Raus!* through which the paradox of hospitality unfolded was deliberately nonconvivial (as opposed to the examples of relational esthetic) but rather agonistic and often antagonistic, verging on violence.

Solidaristic intersubjectivities

Solidaristic intersubjectivities are neither convivial, in a sense of smoothing over differences and complexities, nor entirely antithetical to antagonisms. In a sense, they

encompass both a possibility of conviviality and difficulties that make this conviviality fleeting, or even false. For example, providing foreign aid to Global South countries, or after natural and other disasters could be understood as solidaristic. However, military interventions (e.g. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervention in Serbia in 1999) are fraught with complexities, antagonisms, and (by default) various forms of violence. They can be solidaristic on the one hand but can be extremely antagonistic on the other. Moreover, instances of withdrawing aid (e.g. the United Kingdom's recent decision to cut the foreign aid it has been giving) or examples of economic sanctions (e.g. United States against Cuba) are a stark reminder that solidaristic intersubjectivities also have their Manichean double. Like the other modes of intersubjectivity, these too are physicalized and embodied. However, art and various modes of performance, while limited in their powers, highlight the possibilities and the necessity of solidaristic intersubjectivities.

Immigrant Movement International, the ongoing project of the Cuban performance artist Tanya Bruguera, epitomizes the *ready-made direct action* as a mode of the aesthetic of solidarity and intersubjectivity. Bruguera also calls it *Arte Util* (*Useful Art*). *Immigrant Movement International*, located in Queens, New York, is designated to offer practical support to immigrants in the United States (legal and illegal) in learning their rights and building stronger networks amongst themselves, while working on a range of social projects including art-making workshops for children, free consultations with immigrant lawyers, language classes, and so on. Bruguera, however, frames her social initiatives as a work of art-in-progress—a kind of unfodling *ready-made* socially engaged practice. *Art Util* can be understood as an expanded esthetic that transforms both the artist/audience dichotomy and the theatricality of participation into intersubjective acts of "citizenry" (Mansour 2011).

In India, people campaigning against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the erosion of constitutional guarantees built an aesthetic and solidaristic network that reached out beyond community borders. The resistance to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government's pushing through a law on citizenship that seeks to identify the Muslim community as not deserving of refuge led to an outcry among the Muslim populations in the country and among all those who take India's secularism seriously. It resulted in astonishing political spectacles of solidarity—hundreds of people, particularly women, who had never participated in political protests coming out and peacefully occupying public spaces in opposition to this exclusionary and discriminatory law (Rai 2024). As the state weaponized the Constitution, the women of Shaheen Bagh in southeast Delhi decided that they had had enough. Coming out of their homes, they made their presence felt in a way that connected them with the Indian independence movement—an insistence that their rights be recognized through their presence in a public space that could not be overlooked. They occupied a road and made it into a garden (*bagh*) of hope, an esthetic oasis in the midst of the hustle and bustle of a mega-city's poor corner. It became a political and aesthetic space—with art,

books, and libraries; with recitation of poetry and readings in different languages, classical and popular singers entertained playwrights from different parts of the country wrote and produced plays and academics gave lectures and explained the importance of the constitutional rights that the women of Shaheen Bagh were fighting for. The optimism among the protesters was palpable—perhaps this was a turning point in Indian politics? The exuberant art in Shaheen Bagh also made global connections with struggles across borders. As the Black Lives Matter movement gathered strength in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd in May 2020, the solidarity of the oppressed was expressed in murals—Malcolm X and B.R. Ambedkar shared a mural and the words of Martin Luther King brought them together, the leader of Black refusal to engage with an institutionally racist state, and the slogan of #MuslimLivesMatter, connecting this struggle with that of Black people everywhere.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we expand the concept of intersubjectivity by reading it through the lens of politics and performance and by defining intersubjectivity of the "I" through the "Other" through mediating roles and functions. As we have shown through hermeneutic devises of theatricality and performativity, intersubjectivity, as a relational process embodied through (inter)action, can be taken neither as a static set of relational patterns and networks nor as a social concept separated from its physical manifestations. If we return briefly to Kristeva and her evocation of Freud's uncanny strangeness and the original term itself—*unheimlich* (un-homy in its literal translation), the strangeness that contains in itself a contradiction *Heim*/home—also implies a spatial dimension. The "Other," whether internalized or external—and our relationship (collective or individual, political or personal)—occupies a certain space: *Heim*/home and its opposition. Intersubjectivity as a social category takes place in space (and consequently, and inevitably, time). It takes shape through language and discourse, through mediations and translations but also through acts and actions that are embodied and physicalized. It is in and through performance (in our *is/as-performance* understanding of that term) that key political notions and practices are shaped, contested, negotiated and reshaped from democracy and representation to various aspects of International Relations. Body, voice, gesture are among the key aspects through which intersubjective relations in the socio-political arena unfold. They emerge variously as means of asserting presence, as continuity and as rapture, as language and as translation, as affects and as effects, and in a range of modes from conviviality and solidarity to antagonism and violence. As we argued in the *Handbook of Politics and Performance* (Rai et al. 2021: 17), "Politics and performance demands attention to the particular textures of theatricality, performative labor, and embodied practice that in turn suggest reception of performances in different registers. Politics and performance

foreground the political dimensions of performance and the performative shaping of the political." As we demonstrate in this chapter, a politics and performance lens provides us with a particular and expansive understanding of our worlds through an interdisciplinary approach, with all the challenges, risks, and rewards attendant upon such a venture.

Note

1. Homi Bhabha also introduces the category of *Third Space* as directly linked to his notion of hybridity, which he (like Lefebvre and Soja) sees not as synthesis of two original categories where all the differences are erased, but as a space "which enables other positions to emerge" and "gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (Soja 1996: 27). His emphasis is on multicultural and cross-cultural dimensions and possibilities of spatiality. The concept is also applicable to the context of exile and immigration.

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CHAPTER 11

(MIS)RECOGNITION

THOMAS LINDEMANN

INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades, the phenomenon of (mis)recognition has been scrutinized in different disciplines, including philosophy, political theory, legal theory, sociology, and lately also by International Relations (Honneth 1992; Markell 2003; Ikäheimo 2012; Lindemann and Ringmar 2012; Epstein, Lindemann, and Sending 2018). What most of these studies have in common is a dissatisfaction with utilitarian models in social science. Instead of reasoning in terms of monological interests, recognition scholars consider that social struggles often have an expressive substratum and, in particular, the subject's desire to be recognized by other subjects. When individuals, social groups, or political unities interact with each other, it is not only for the sake of given material goods but also for the right to achieve something in order to be somebody. At times, the experience of struggle counts more for recognition than the result of these struggles.

Despite common themes, recognition theories still diverge. In this contribution, I argue that most authors have focused on what actors have to *get* in order to be recognized: love, rights, social esteem, and material resources. Of course, receiving symbolic and material goods is a condition for recognition. If we receive applause from our students for a lecture, we will feel rewarded. On the contrary, if we do not receive gratitude from others for what we consider as a great favor, we will feel misrecognized. However, if we receive compliments without having accomplished something, we might suspect inauthentic recognition. Often, when actors receive gifts they cannot reciprocate, they will literally be poisoned and disempowered (Caillé 2007). When international actors criticize Western paternalism, the conditionality of foreign aid, democratic proselytism, or cultural uniformization, they do not necessarily doubt the "Other's" good intentions. Such misrecognition is related to the perception that they are not masters of their lives. Thus, what is largely left outside of recognition debates is the question of how much actors can *contribute* to a social group. It is impossible to have a sense of recognition in society without agency.

I will also demonstrate in this chapter that agentic misrecognition pervades International Relations (IR) positivist science. Axiological neutrality (Weber 2017) and, notably the figure of the "sovereign subject" (Doty 1993) and its independence

from other subjects and objects provides the rationale for international conflicts and exploitation. The same holds true for positivist determinism through structuralism and methodological individualism based on the denial of sociability. Both positivist frames, structuralist and individualist, legitimize social domination as "out of human hands." More generally, it is considered here that the debate about justice oscillating between recognition and redistribution is biased. Material exploitation presupposes misrecognition frames such as the meritocratic ideology of the self-made millionaire that finds its equivalence in IR in the nationalist pretention of "elected nations" or simply the *topos* of "developed" nations (Smith 1987). International conflicts and social injustice cannot be separated from agentic (mis)recognition schemas.

In the second section, I distinguish philosophical and sociological approaches to misrecognition and make the point that they have the potential to come together through an International Political Sociology perspective. In the third section, I examine how misrecognition feeds international conflicts, social inequalities, and resistance toward globalization. In the fourth section, I demonstrate that mainstream IR scholarship produces epistemic (mis)recognition, which leads to the illusion of a homogenous subject. Overall, I argue that, too often, the (mis)recognition scholarship has omitted one crucial aspect of the (mis)recognition process, the ideal of sovereign agency, that is to say an actor's supposed ability to act autonomously. While mutual recognition supposes that individuals accept the mutual limitation of their agency, the ideal of sovereign agency permeates social reality in contemporary societies. As the story goes, some individuals, social groups, or state actors simply perform better than others and thus deserve their dominant place in (inter)national society. This form of agentic misrecognition is a meta-norm that can shed light on international violence and exploitation.

Misrecognition: From philosophy to International Political Sociology

Misrecognition is a concept derived from philosophy, with its most famous formulation proposed by Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* and its famous master–slave dialectic (Hegel 1977 [1807]). While Hegel never uses the term "misrecognition," he asserts, nevertheless, that recognition—the confirmation of the existence and value of the self—could only be achieved through relations with others and through formative activity (Hegel 1977 [1807]: 118, 196). Misrecognition can be captured in at least two ways in Hegel's work: first, invisibility or the impossibility to achieve a sense of the self due to denial of our very existence, such as slaves in Antiquity or the weak attention accorded to starving people on the African continent in the contemporary world (Honneth 2005: 39). Thus, even more humiliating than to be depreciated in a social group is to be simply ignored. A second aspect of misrecognition is linked to the social value

accorded to individuals qualified as inferior and insignificant. Such depreciation can also be moral when we assert that someone is corrupt and has a bad reputation. Hegel refers to asymmetric values in social relations by hinting at the master–slave power asymmetry. Even in relations between "free" individuals, recognition is rarely equally attributed, and social hierarchies are firmly established, for example between the racialized Uber employees and those who benefit from their services.

Scholars in IR have integrated definitions of misrecognition inspired by philosophy. Misrecognition in IR can mean (mis)identification, invisibility, status depreciation, or all of the above. Even realist approaches accord some attention to (mis)recognition, illustrating its increasing relevance to mainstream IR. (Mis)recognition through a realist lens is more or less synonymous with the status denial of great powers, defined as a gap between what a great power should deserve according to its power potential and what it actually obtains (Paul, Larson, and Wohlforth 2014). In this overview, I focus on contributions from an International Political Sociology perspective (Lawson 2007).

An International Political Sociology approach must first problematize what it means to be an actor in international politics. In the contemporary international system, states have more visibility and prestige in international politics than nonstate actors. One case that comes immediately to mind regarding recognition is classical state recognition. In legal theory, there is disagreement as to whether states are recognized by their effective control over a given territory, population, and administration or, on the contrary, by the fact that significant others, such as "great powers," recognize them. The discussion is not just theoretical, as illustrated by the continued recognition of Somalia and the failure to recognize Somaliland, which has the formal attributes of a state (Fabry 2010). Declarative theories of Law and IR consider that states exist in a monadic manner (Fabry 2010: 3) and neglect that rightful membership in the family of nations has to be attributed by someone, much like access to an exclusive club. In turn, constitutive theory overrates the performativity of recognition acts. Nobody could imagine that a district of London or Paris could become a state even if important actors recognize it as such. Constitutive and declarative forms of statehood describe two different forms of agency. Declarative theory presupposes agency and intersubjectivity because it would be impossible to govern over a territory and population without a minimum of social arrangements and consent with the governed. Constitutive theory implies the existence of agency of the recognized actor. Acts of recognition suppose considering subjects as morally responsible, at the difference of a baby that could not be conceived as a discursive agent (Erman 2013: 137). Nonstate actors, such as migrants from the Global South or stateless minorities like the Kurds, are not only less visible than established state actors but also more exposed to violence as they are considered less "worthy" of protection in international law than the "sovereign state."

The status dimension of recognition is connected but not reducible to power hierarchies (Wolf 2011). The United Nations, with its pecking order (Pouliot 2016), reflects recognition disparities between the permanent and rotating members of the

Security Council. The status of a given actor is largely conditioned by their attributed agency. Practice-oriented scholars inspired by Bourdieu have shown that Western domination in international organizations depends greatly on formal and informal practices, such as the "pen holder" status (Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014). The latter allowed Western diplomats to dominate Russian and Chinese diplomats in the Security Council decision relating to the Libyan intervention in 2011 (Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014). Status misrecognition against "poor populations" is also sustained through agentic denial. Thus, a rich scholarship in International Political Sociology has shown that Western "donor" countries and even nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) contribute to framing the Global South as "developing" and thus less worthy and autonomous than the "West" and in need of intervention (e.g. Kowalski 2011).

Disagreements on actors' status and visibility often result from disagreement over their (potential) achievements. Thus, while Russian political leaders may estimate that their country deserves a leading role in world politics thanks to past achievements such as defeating Nazi Germany, leaders of Western powers frame Russia as an authoritarian power with declining weight in IR and little to "offer" the democratic in-group. While the attribution of agency is not the equivalent of (mis)recognition, it is intrinsically linked to it (Lindemann 2018). Those aspects of agency that condition misrecognition can be considered as forms of agentic misrecognition.

A first aspect of agentic (mis)recognition implies that the subject's autonomy is unequally distributed in the international field. Autonomy for individual and collective actors can never be absolute and is always relational. In a relationship, agentic symmetry would mean reciprocal influence of actions undertaken by A and B. Autonomy in the sense of recognition is related in particular to the ability to escape from "uniformization." From a recognition perspective, loss of autonomy in professional activity is more crucial than the loss of autonomy, let us say, to travel for leisure. The former concerns the creative self and is thus more sensitive for a sense of self-worth. In epistemology, the lack of subjects' autonomy manifests in extreme structuralism where subjects disappear in a whole, driven by exterior determinants. In the international field, extreme economic and political (mis)recognition can be detected where subjects are considered as objects like colonized populations or "under-developed" countries. Another case of agentic misrecognition presents the norm of spheres of interest that does not consider "smaller" nations' submission as injustice (Bull 1977). The norm of democracy promotion is another case of autonomy denial: most subjects do not want to "receive" freedom, but they want to enact freedom. The denial of autonomy is not always fuel for misrecognition. The attribution of fictive autonomy to impoverished populations, let us say, from the Global South, may lead to the conclusion that their misery is self-induced. In this latter sense, misrecognition may also lead to misrepresentation or mis-cognition.

A second aspect of agentic (mis)recognition concerns social agency or the subject's possibility to contribute to a given social group, for instance through the production of

valued objects. To be recognized means not only to be autonomous but also to do something that is valued by others. Epistemologically, the misrecognition of actors' original contribution to society is the uniform interpretation of their actions. This positivist individualism—for instance, in game theory with the famous *homo politicus* or *homo economicus*—gives theoretical weight to subjects' autonomy in comparison to structures but refuses to take into account any singular contribution (Caillé 2007). Subjects appear as interchangeable. Regarding the subject's contribution in IR, it can be useful to refer to a more "object-centered" recognition theory borrowing from Hegel, Marx, and Mauss. For this strand, recognition is an intersubjective phenomenon to be mediated through the activity of work, its production, and exchange of objects. There can be no (mis)recognition between international actors without objects and social activity such as the international division of work, membership, or participation in international institutions. Hegel's servant achieves a sense of the self through their objectification by work, while early Marx shows that the organization of economics and work can be a profound source of alienation (Marx 2008: 59q). Thus, while liberal recognition theories have emphasized mainly legal and identity aspects of recognition, an International Political Sociology approach enables us to understand how (mis)recognition is strongly associated with social agency mediated by objects. While Sen and Nussbaum rightly emphasize empowerment as a condition for self-worth (Sen 2001; Nussbaum 2001), it is important to consider whether social conditions give actors opportunities to decide on their own life.

Both dimensions of agentic misrecognition discussed above—autonomy and social contributions—are intersubjective constructions. In order to be recognized through our work, we need to feel praised for our achievements. In order to be autonomous, the subject depends on the "Other."

Experiences of misrecognition

A further International Political Sociology perspective is more attentive to actors' *experience* of misrecognition. Actors' perception that they do not receive deserved recognition is the result of a disparity between their own self-image and the image they perceive to have received from others. One of the earliest conceptualizations of misrecognition can be found in the collective volume of Lindemann and Ringmar (2012). Most authors in the volume explore misrecognition in line with this interactional perspective. This recognition gap could be due to hubristic self-images (Lindemann 2011), stigmatization (Adler-Nissen 2014), or disdain. The interactional perspective suggests that conflict—armed or not—between state actors is likely if there is an important gap between self-presentation and perceived recognition of the self.

If the experience of (mis)recognition is also mediated by actors' often inflated expectations of recognition, then we have to understand what kind of agency is considered as "noble" in international politics. It is difficult, in this context, to omit the

ideal of sovereignty. Sovereignty fuels the ambition to build an artificial unity of the domestic scene and leads to unachievable aspirations in the international scene. Inflated agency ideals are also rooted in a masculinist ideal of absolute control over the social environment: "Governments seek other governments' recognition of their sovereignty; but they also depend on ideas about masculinized dignity and feminized sacrifice to sustain that sense of autonomous nationhood" (Enloe 1990: 351). Epstein, Lindemann, and Sending (2018) argue that recognition cannot be easily achieved and goes hand in hand with the desire to impose on others one's self-image.

Beyond IR: The contribution of sociological perspectives to (mis)recognition

A sociological perspective to misrecognition implies paying attention to how existing societies distribute recognition among individuals and social groups and how actors cope with misrecognition. While a philosopher might refer to abstract logics in order to suggest what adequate recognition should be, a sociologist might be more inclined to examine why some social groups get more recognition than others and how misrecognition shapes actors' behavior. The debate animated by the philosophers Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth over the past decades on whether recognition claims replace the redistribution issue in social struggles illustrates well how philosophical and sociological perspectives may be combined but also how they may differ (Fraser and Honneth 2003). Recognition in this debate is mainly understood as acknowledgment of identities with associated cultural rights for a given social group. Accordingly, groups such as ethnic minorities may not seek better socio-economic conditions but the right to have their own schools, universities, or even hospitals. Fraser and Honneth make the point that recognition has led to the privilege of identity issues over redistributive ones, which implicitly plays into the hands of neoliberalism (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 88sq). For instance, some large-scale companies have integrated more ethnic minorities and women into their leadership without modifying the sharp salary hierarchy between "directing" and "directed" positions. In his reply to Fraser, Honneth claims that class struggles for redistribution cannot be dissociated from experiences of misrecognition: being deprived of resources is not only a question of "discomfort" but also an expression of symbolic violence (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 92sq). People with lower wages are generally less respected in capitalist societies than those with higher ones. Furthermore, while some authors (Honneth, Taylor, Kymlicka) consider that collective identities can be a legitimate subject of recognition, others (Fraser, Markell) believe that the recognition of identities leads to their essentialization. While both authors integrate some sociological elements into their arguments, their debate could be sociologically more nuanced by better taking into account the variety of social groups that ask for identity rights. For instance, the recognition of a professional group or of an identity group—Bulgarian minorities in Romania—that allows their members to choose to enter or leave a community is less problematic than the recognition of groups that

naturalize belonging and that inflict on their members cultural practices that are incompatible with social emancipation, such as female genital mutilation.

This leads us toward the sociological observation of what counts as social recognition in a given society. At least since Weber (2010), the question of legitimacy of social orders is central in sociology. His analysis of the Protestant ethic as quest to detect signs for election through the production of material goods can be conceived as recognition norms of capitalist societies. These norms are often based on the fiction of a sovereign hard-working and effective individual. What matters for the Protestant capitalist is to prove his or her election through the production and accumulation of wealth. While there exist differences in philosophical and sociological recognition perspectives, most authors agree that the attribution of social agency is the operator of (mis)recognition. Even in Antiquity and traditional societies, recognition and honor are earned through agency performances. In Marcel Mauss's *The Gift* (1950), we can observe that those who are deemed generous thanks to their gifts, such as the *Big Men* in Melanesia and Polynesia, are also those who possess the most prestigious position in society. Mauss suggests that the more the cycle of giving–receiving and reciprocating is balanced, the more societies seem to be peaceful, such as the Kula, a ceremonial exchange system in Papua New Guinea that creates social bonds between tribes (Mauss 1950:162). However, in many societies, practices conform to the ideal of the sovereign gift: the "Other" is not able to reciprocate and must simply submit themselves to the donor.

A sociological perspective might problematize how actors cope with misrecognition and consider that reactions to misrecognition will vary depending on social positions and normative framings. Philosophical works often seem to presume that objective forms of misrecognition, such as discrimination in work, culture, or affective attention, will mirror a groups' recognition demands, notably for equality. However, at times, dominated social groups may have interiorized their presumed inferiority, which seems to be confirmed by their difficulty to reproduce practices of the dominant classes, such as their failure to produce the same school results as more privileged classes. At other times, dominated groups may wish to reverse, or even to eliminate, their oppressors.

So far, philosophical perspectives on recognition have privileged "progressive" recognition struggles over those that seems to be reactionary, such as fundamentalist movements against homosexual marriage asking for recognition of "real families." There is a relative blindness in existing recognition studies toward "reactionary" recognition demands. Notably, no attention has been paid to so-called populist movements in the United States, Great Britain, Brazil, or the Philippines. Recognition scholarship seems also to have neglected murderous struggles for recognition in civil wars or genocides, such as in Rwanda in 1994. Better understanding of such "immoral" recognition struggles seem to be one of the most challenging tasks for International Political Sociology. The ideal of sovereign agency may shed light on how experiences of misrecognition are mediated. Thus, marginalized groups may attribute their misery to

globalization and open borders. Norms of "patriarchal society" and the post-colonial legacy contribute to the ideal of sovereign agency. While women are often framed as passive and emotional, with their agency confined to domestic spheres, men are traditionally presented as active, dominant, rational, and responsible (Enloe 1990). In international politics, masculinity is strengthened by the recognition criteria of great powers, which are supposed to control spheres of influence and to possess nuclear arms (Bull 1977).

Interactional perspectives also enrich the comprehension of how actors cope with misrecognition. This sociological tradition gives greater agency to dominated groups than, for instance, a Bourdieusian inspired approach. Thus, scholars, like Elias (Elias and Scotson 1994) or Goffman (2009) consider that excluded social groups may return their imposed stigma. This may be particularly true for stigmatized state actors in international politics that have powerful resources on the domestic level to reframe the misrecognition narrative from the "outside." For instance, depreciated state actors often make out of their stigmatized characteristics such as "backwardness" a distinctive quality such as "vitality" against "Western decadence." Thus, neither leaders of marginalized Russia nor North Korea have interiorized a presuming inferiority of their political unit; quite to the contrary, they perform their absolute sovereignty by testing, for instance, nuclear weapons and referring to a historical or divine mission.

Thus, sociological perspectives highlight the obstacles of mutual recognition such as power, wealth asymmetries, or patriarchal and post-colonial practices. Finally, it might be worth considering the epistemological foundations of social science, where it is often considered that a sovereign self, free from any social condition, would be able to determine truth when one applies appropriated instruments to discover nature and societies. In Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1997), modern positivist science is conceived as purely instrumental, the affirmation of total autonomy of the human toward nature. The authors assert that science is trying not only to reflect reality but also to shape social reality through standardization or the neutralization of negativity. As I will argue in the final section of this chapter, "modern" social science also constitutes a form of misrecognition in the sense that it opposes a sovereign research subject where one can extract oneself from social conditions to a research "object" to whom one should be indifferent.

So far, International Political Sociology has only sparsely explored the topic of misrecognition. In a general manner, the project of International Political Sociology (IPS) is not to oppose sociology and political theory, but rather to combine them. While sociology can provide the tools to better understand the empirical social conditions of misrecognition, such as the ideal of sovereign agency, political theory provides normative criteria to differentiate moral from immoral demands of recognition by hinting at contradictions in the attempt of the "superior" sovereign to be recognized by the inferior dominated and objectified subject.

Misrecognition in IR

Misrecognition is ubiquitous in world politics. Recognition dynamics surface in the political field when social groups claim equal rights for their sexual orientation, when national minorities strive for their recognition as states, or when states demand more standing in international organizations. However, even if (mis)recognition is not perceived by a social group, the differentiation of the subjects' existence and value is as tangible as material injustice. For instance, hierarchies of recognition translate in the unequal grief about people killed across borders. Finally, the desire for recognition through exercising agency also permeates actors' conscious or unconscious resistance against capitalist globalization, migration, or supranational integration. In the following three sections, I spell out these different facets of international misrecognition.

International conflict and agentic misrecognition

One could suppose that mutual state agentic recognition should appease at least relations between states. Thus, the ping-pong diplomacy and the full membership of communist China in the United Nations and its Security Council was followed by a period of détente with the United States. The multiplication of the legal recognition of states corresponds to a relative pacification of interstate wars. The annexation of territory is almost judged as "criminal" behavior and incompatible with the rules of the sovereign recognition principles. Many war-waging political entities—Hamas, the Taliban, Islamic State authorities—are not legally recognized. Unrecognized entities can be more easily attacked than recognized ones, perhaps because they seem less respectable. Unrecognized political entities may prove their existence through the demonstration of their agency according to Tilly's saying that states make war and wars make states (Tilly 1989).

Mutual legal state recognition has an incontestably dark side, notably regarding the world of unrecognized actors. State recognition of ethnic minorities can reinforce the belief of an incommensurable alterity, indivisible territories (Goddard 2006), and shape self–other relations in terms of "friend–enemy" distinctions (Bartelson 2013). It would be useful to qualify whether cultural minorities strive for a new state in spite of a demographically mixed territory or whether they ask for equal recognition inside a given political unity. The latter aspect is evidently less problematic for state recognition. On the contrary, recognition of states with minorities but with leaders that are committed to the ideal of the homogenous nation-state fuel conflicts. State leaders that perform the "indivisible nation" doctrine after decolonization have induced state violence against minorities, such as in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, or Mali (Gallagher 2018). In some instances, increased participation and recognition of minorities can transform separatist demands, such as in the case of Quebecois separatism or republicanism in Northern Ireland, that have shifted over time from the blunt politics of

opposition to a practice of transformation (Cash 1996). This suggests that (mis)recognition practices actively transform identities and that it makes no sense to treat identities as given facts exogenous to social interaction.

Of course, the link between recognition and international conflict cannot be presumed by legal state recognition. One possible angle for an IPS approach in understanding international conflict is hubristic self-images relating to the idea of absolute sovereignty and masculinized self-descriptions (Lindemann 2011; Holm and Sending 2018). As in epistemic misrecognition, self and others are assembled as homogenous unities, and the "pure" self is considered as superior to others. Claims for more recognition are articulated not only by dominated people but also even more so by dominant ones. If we take a look at the international scene, we can observe that representatives of privileged states such as Vladimir Putin, Donald Trump, Joseph Biden, Xing Ping, or Emmanuel Macron complain about their supposed marginal role in world politics. Agentic asymmetries typically feed ambitions to govern over less "able" people.

A common theme of hubristic misrecognition is the *topos* of "backwardness." Certain social groups, countries, regions, or even continents are denied an ability to give something valuable to civilization. Extra-Western states are considered less "efficient" than established Western ones. Patrick Jackson (2006), Rebecca Adler-Nissen (2014), and Ayşe Zarakol (2010) outline that stigmatization is not only an erratic behavior but also deeply anchored in the structures of IR and rhetorical commonplaces. For instance, Russia, Turkey, and Japan have been considered for centuries as backwards, "outsider" states. Adler-Nissen (2014) is more attentive to stigmatization due to the "burden of past" in countries like Austria and Germany. It seems easier for states to remove the stigma of a fascist past than "Oriental backwardness." Thus, Western Germany's political leaders' strategy of the "good pupil of democracy" finally paid off and helped Germany to earn a reputation as a reliable partner, contrary to Russia's European politics in the 1990s. Economic (mis)performances and "civilizational proximity" weigh more heavily in removing stigmatization than moral (mis)performances.

Political leaders must enact sovereign norms. Performance and recognition are inextricably linked. For instance, when elderly people do not perform or do not make believe that they can handle their own life and think responsibly, they may be deprived of recognition as political subjects. Performance does not imply that actors can really do what is expected for a given subject but that they can convince their audience of their agency abilities. As Goffman (2009) has suggested, nearly every individual has a potential lack of what is expected for genuine recognition, and the ability to obtain recognition much depends on actors' performance. In international politics, performances of "sovereignty" or "strength" have to be enacted by states or great powers. Thus, "putting a state aside" in IR can induce state leaders to overcompensate their "emasculation" through spectacular practices. Political leaders of states like Russia, Turkey, Iran, and North Korea seem to perform their sovereign agency in order to demonstrate their standing as a great power (Ringmar 1996: Wolf 2011). Even

Jihadists often identify with the masculine sovereign state ideal in IR (Lindemann 2018).

Agentic misrecognition and international inequalities

Dominant recognition frames are also significant if we want to understand how endemic economic inequalities operate beyond the seemingly "sovereign territorial logics." The most evident reasoning behind such exclusionary practices is that populations who are exploited are considered as invisible, inferior, or even slaves. But how can we make sense of this?

A first common frame of the exploited is its invisibilization, that is to say the perception of the dominated as "objects" integrated in a naturalized market. Inequalities seem to be "natural," falling from the sky. Past social practices progressively solidify in structures, which therefore seem written in stone (Rose 2013). Exposing social domination necessitates identifying human agency behind exploitation. Science such as classical economics contribute to framing this reality as all-encompassing and exterior to human beings. This kind of science actively contributes to presenting reality as frozen and ahistorical. The exploited figure is denied agency and life; they are literally commodified (Marx 2008). What seemingly justifies unequal resources in global capitalism is the objective attribution of wages according to their market value. According to this narrative, exploited people deserve their low wage, much like managers deserve their high salary because their contributing activity is objectified in market value.

A second misrecognition frame is the meritocratic idea of "gifted and hardworking" people. Much of the education system, with its ranking and value of excellence, reproduces the social structures with its inequal distribution of economic and cultural capital and distinction (Bourdieu 1979). In spite of this sociological insight, it is still often assumed that successful individuals and nations deserve their position thanks to their skills and efforts. The concept of meritocracy permeates the Hollywood film industry, "wherein economic success is tied to individual agency: If one works hard enough, upward social mobility is within reach for one and one's offspring, and thus the 'American dream' is achieved" (Chang 2021: 21). It is often seen as common sense that economically advanced nations such as Germany and Japan owe their position to their outstanding, hard-working populations. While international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) do not explicitly depreciate whole nations as lazy and unreliable, they assert that economic "misperformances" are due to "bad" governance (Feldmann 2017). Seemingly objective indicators such as public debt, productivity, and privatization furnish arguments to disqualify national economies (Larner and Walters 2004). Furthermore, economic doctrines sustain UK or US supremacy while appearing universal in form "in referring for instance to comparative advantage, free trade, and the golden standard" (Cox 1983: 221). For instance, former colonized

nations such as Brazil, or even contemporary Greece, are often framed as unfit, and this kind of thinking leads to economic "paternalism" incarnated in strict "development" interventions.

Economic misperformances are also used to justify political hierarchy in IR and its underlying pecking order. Stigmatization of Russia and Turkey by Western states is based on the premise that they do not perform the ideal of "modernity" and notably advanced industrialization. Often, these states are also judged to not conform to the standards of stable "liberal" democracy, even if they have engaged in the process of democratization. These countries are labelled as "under-developed," "illiberal" democracies (Zakaria 1997), obscuring from view the illiberal practices in "Western" democracies (Bigo and Tsoukala 2008). In other words, discrimination of international actors cannot be dissociated from dominant economic and "civilizational" norms of agentic excellence. Most notably, it is good Western neoliberal governance that provides recognition.

Agentic misrecognition and resistance against globalization

There seems to be an ongoing number of shrinking political entities (Wendt 2003). While the international landscape counted several thousand relative autonomous political entities in ancient times, about 200 states exist today. Contemporary globalization brings with it numerous challenges transcending the nation-state, such as climate change, and seems to accelerate centralization. Recognition dynamics seem to push in the same direction of global centralization: it is easier to achieve equal recognition for subjects if national borders are suppressed. While plausible, I will argue that the desire for agentic recognition produces more ambiguous results: a centralized universal authority would give little space for subjects to have a sense of contributing to social reality.

One of the earliest conceptualizations of recognition in IR is Alexander Wendt's article "Why a World State Is Inevitable" (2003). Recognition presupposes one's confirmation of identity by autonomous others. The Westphalian system of *cujus regio, ejus religio* seems to be compatible with reciprocal recognition, but the strong power asymmetries between states directly affect the amount of consideration a subject obtains across borders. A chief executive officer (CEO) from Nairobi will probably be less respected in a Western luxury hotel than a US businessman. Therefore, in order to have equal rights and recognition, a world state would seemingly be an ideal solution. Alexandre Kojève (2007) presents similar arguments with his idea of the universal and homogenous world state in his *Phenomenology of Right*. For Kojève, a subject's recognition desire cannot be satisfied in the existing state system due to its division in nations. Rights linked to the recognition of freedom and equality have to be universal in order to be effective, and he supposes the abolition of political entities with their borders in order to avoid particular applications of the global jurisdiction. In the final

world state, the desire of all subjects would be satisfied. All would receive recognition as free and equal. Kojève is ambiguous about the attractiveness of such a fulfillment.

The unavoidability of a world state can be contested from a recognition perspective. Who would guarantee the recognition of the world state? If there is only one actor, there can be nothing other than self-recognition. One could reply that this state is composed of individuals who could recognize each other. But could this powerful superstate grant equal recognition to its subjects without imposing itself as an actor more equal than others? Another weakness of this approach is its hierarchical bias: actors would have to delegate much of their power to a world state seemingly removed from their daily lives. It is difficult to believe that such a world state could provide subjects with the feeling that they can master their life. Political and cultural agency of subjects implies some "localism" where subjects can concretely realize their political will. The struggle for recognition goes hand in hand with centrifugal elements. This leads us to another related question: why is it that, in the name of recognition, actors are often opposed to globalization? Epstein responds, "The desire for sovereignty that is tightly bound up with the state appears to be reasserting itself wherever we turn, with a vengeance" (2020: 2).

While resistance against globalization and international integration may be attributed in part to neoliberalism, another aspect of this resistance is the perception that "global elites" remove from "ordinary people" their self-determination. Social movements plead in the name of their empowerment, identity, and dignity against supranational integration (Kinvall 2007; Adler-Nissen 2014). Browning (2019) notes the populist "fantasies" sustaining Brexit built around a series of narratives promising freedom, liberation, subjectivity, and agency. Much of this narrative is based on an ideal of absolute sovereignty. The idea of a single, coherent, and unified subject can be seen as part of "an imaginary construct that the individual needs to believe in to compensate for a constitutive lack that lies at the core of her (or his) identity" (Epstein 2011: 334). Yet, the hierarchical aspect of a "world state" and ongoing European integration is not compatible with a subject's recognition desire for "sovereign" agency. Recognition must be enacted and "objectified," for example, by local political institutions and it is likely that democratic decisions made by seven billion habitants will seem removed from their sovereign agency. The specter of separatism lurks behind the world state. Should the world state emerge, it can quickly become a *chateau des cartes*, much like the European Union.

(Mis)recognition in positivist IR

While no scholar in IR would admit to "misrecognizing" social reality or the value of individuals or individuality, this process can nevertheless also be observed, notably in mainstream IR scholarship. Epistemic misrecognition results from three related

dynamics. First, positivists believe in the possibility of gaining access to the truth. This ambition goes hand in hand with what Simone de Beauvoir qualifies as the sovereign who is the one who imposes unity or wholeness. Subjects exist independently of how they interact with others (De Beauvoir 1962). The sovereign scientific subject uncovers truth via detachment vis-à-vis her research "objects" (Huth and Russett 1990). Second, positivist structuralism invisibilizes the subjects in whole and denies the contingency of social arrangements (George 1989). Subjects appear as devoid of any possibility to master their future and social reality appears as reified and alien to human beings. Third, and associated with the general ambition to uncover laws, is the tendency of positivist epistemologies to formalize social behavior (Jackson 2016: 200) through utilitarian interpretations (*homo economicus* or *homo politicus*) (Caillé 2007). What is denied in this epistemology is the idea of recognition: intersubjective relations characterized by mutual consideration and trust. The world resembles a struggle between self-interested atoms. I will briefly discuss these different aspects of positivist misrecognition.

Researchers' sovereignty and other objectification

According to mainstream positivism, subjects exist independently, and thus sovereignly, from other subjects and objects (Rose 2013). Even in Kantism, there is a strict separation between subjects and objects. Knowledge seems "out there," and truth can be detected through appropriate instruments. Against this separatist epistemology, recognition implies that the self (inter)acts with subjects and objects. The "being" is constantly modified through interactions. For instance, it is historically untenable to speak of the "French" self-consciousness in the fourteenth century. National self-consciousness developed out of assembling different groups from regions to face external threats. Identity fluidity is incompatible with neo-positivism and its quest for solid (statistical) regularities and laws (Jackson 2011: 200). Current data sets on international conflict give the impression that entities such as Russia and ethnic groups have existed for centuries and that the propensity to conflict can be measured by ethnolinguistic fractionalization (ELF). The same is true for the framing of "civilizations" that now belong to the "conceptual lexicon of social scientists" (Jackson 2006: 10).

One may ask what, concretely, this essentialist epistemology of subjects implies for the ontological stance in international politics. Positivist framings of social reality favor "substantialism," seeing entities as not only homogenous but also unchangeable. Nation-states appear as eternal, and relations of social domination as unavoidable (Weber 2010: 977). Positivist misrecognition of singularities can lead to exaggerated threat perceptions. If we consider subjects as untouched in their identity by exchanges with subjects and objects, then they appear as rigidified and othered, such as in Huntington's clash of civilizations. Another aspect of essentialist categorization is the assumption of

coherence whereby actors are unified with the associated assumption that they "plan" their actions (Jervis 1976). For mainstream IR scholarship, the best explanation is often the most parsimonious and logical one.

The belief in science, truth, and a sovereign self-detached from its research objects is able to induce what Jade Schiff calls borrowing from Hannah Arendt thoughtlessness (Schiff 2014). One of the most dramatic examples that comes to mind is, of course, the "efficient" modern bureaucrat, Adolf Eichmann. In world politics, moral responsibility is relativized in the name of science if one thinks of the dogma of prevention against "rising China," "terrorism," or "migrants" (Allison 2017).

Structural invisibilization of subjects and conflict fatalism

Structural approaches in IR such as neorealism, neoliberalism, or mainstream constructivism tend to have a top-down vision of IR. Subjects are hidden in an aggregated whole culminating in the reification of collective actors such as states or the "international community." Structures are naturalized as outside human agency, such as in Mearsheimer's interpretation of great power wars as "systemic imperative" (Jackson 2006). Meanings of world politics are considered as self-evident across time and space and reduced to an unavoidable struggle for power resulting from "the anarchy problematique" (Ashley 1995). While mainstream constructivism recognizes the normativity and intersubjectivity of structures (Adler 1997), it nevertheless assumes, in practice, that global norms impose the logic of "appropriate" behavior (Sending 2002).

One aspect of misrecognition in mainstream structuralist approaches is their naturalization of domination and conflict. To consider that IR is structured by great powers or globalization and competition for markets hides the contingency of the state system and the human contribution to it. While structures such as the capitalist system constrain human agency, they are not iron laws, and they have been constituted and enacted through practices. If interiorized, structural accounts lead to alienation and de-subjectification, where the self is understood as driven by external forces. "Exterior" social reality appears powerful and hostile to subjects. The possibility of change is underestimated, and this can nourish conflict fatalism. Power transition theorists today predict the "rise of China" (Allison 2017), while in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, many predicted Soviet Union expansion (Gilpin 1981). Such fatalism can generate the preventive war idea under certain circumstances.

Positivist denial of agency and the impossibility of social recognition

Most positivist researchers assert that the main objective of science should be to find regularities in social reality (Waltz 2010: 116). Behavior is standardized, as reflected in the famous realist *homo politicus* or the more liberal *homo economicus* (Snidal 1985). These framings of social reality via laws denies a place for human agency and intersubjectivity. A subjects' valorization implies the attribution of autonomy and

morality for actions. If subjects are only moved by general causes, they are devoid of any personal accomplishment.

Ontologically, this robotic framing of social behavior excludes mutual recognition and trust from social relations. Even if individualist approaches claim to value actors' autonomy, especially strategic competences, they deny social links. In Marx's critique of the political economy, he refuses the idea that competition and instrumental treatment of others as commodity results from human nature but demonstrates, instead, that it is linked to the functioning of the capitalist economy that is constituted through social practices. In mainstream realist IR theory, competition between state units is explained by anarchy. While human-made, anarchy is naturalized as an unescapable condition of state competition (Mearsheimer 2001). Such understandings favor alarmism, notably by denying the possibility that actors may recognize or identify with each other. In these analyses, future threats are mainly deduced from past regularities. The future seems like an amplified present. For instance, Graham Allison asserts the likelihood of a conflict between the United States and China by comparing previous power transitions between great powers since ancient times (Allison 2017). All appears as if history repeats itself and that human fate is like a Greek tragedy. On the contrary, if one takes seriously recognition, regularities cannot be considered as written in stone. Subjects possess self-consciousness, and they constantly modify their behavior in order to achieve recognition. If we take Hegel's original journey of recognition, self-consciousness striving for superiority leads to failure because it is impossible to be recognized by inferiors (Hegel 1977). Finally, subjects interact with their environment and need formative work in order to exist. Contrary to what positivists often assume, subjects modify their behavior on the basis of prior failures and thus also modify their self-understandings.

Typical to agentic misrecognition is the concept of interest. As recalled by Epstein and Jackson in this Handbook, there are *no actors with prior interests*. For a recognition perspective, actors will define what and who they value in relation to what others value and desire. Thus, interest is constituted by what is recognized as having value in a given community. Recognition implies skepticism toward studies that claim to define interests from an exterior "scientific" point of view. Recognizing attitudes requires empathy with research objects and an attempt to capture their life world. It is revealing that in positivist mainstream journals, only rarely do authors give any consideration to the subjects' experiences. Behind the notion of interest looms a vision of others as manipulable and only functional for achieving own desires. Typically, deterrence theory conceptualizes subject "targets" as pure objects of manipulation (Aachen and Snidal 1989). In world politics, the "desire" for agency may explain what is otherwise difficult to understand: the armed resistance of Palestinians against Israelis in spite of strong deterrence; the Brexiter decision in spite of strong economic costs or resistance against "development" aid. What matters for subjects is not only individualistic gain but also to feel good when interacting with others (Caillé 2007).

One key neglected aspect of IR since its foundation is the idea of actors' morality, mocked particularly by realists but also by critical approaches as naïve. While realists deny the significance of morality in referring to international power dynamics, critical thinkers often suppose that international politics is driven by elites' interests, such as the preservation of domestic power through an aggressive foreign policy. Part of this disregard is the prevalence of utilitarian approaches in economics that inform much IR thinking. Normativity is deduced from the existing, of what is normal and what is identified as a trend. Another misunderstanding of morality is its reduction to good and universal objectives, while moral considerations can also be "bad." What matters in morality is conformity to social norms. While constructivists mostly take into consideration morality as something that is related to noble norms such as "anti-apartheid," recognition scholars following in IPS perspective might investigate what norms define the existence and value of actors.

Conclusion

For IPS, norms of performances constitute a subject's (mis)recognition. The reification of international reality, international conflict, exploitation, and resistance against globalization are sustained by agentic misrecognition. The themes of epistemic misrecognition—the sovereignty of the "knowing" subject, the structural disappearance of the subject, denial of the possibility of mutual recognition in a world constituted by self-interested actors—participate in the legitimation of international violence and exploitation. Thus, much of the acceptance of violence and exploitation in world politics is sustained by the idea that some nations are simply not apt to live in peaceful prosperity because they do not perform according to moral standards. Recently, the billionaire Elon Musk responded to the Word Food Programme that he would donate $6 billion if United Nations representatives can show how they will "solve world hunger." Much of the world's injustices are framed as (scientifically speaking) unavoidable, given the "incapacity" of international organizations and suffering populations. Once again, supposed agentic misperformance legitimizes misrecognition. Those who have less agency in world politics, such as the unemployed and the poor, may not possess sufficient "cultural capital" to mobilize against the roots of their misrecognition, but their "agentic desire" is never eclipsed and may be expressed through other objects of resistance.

The ideal of a subject's sovereignty shapes IR epistemology and practices in world politics. Sovereignty is colored with representations of masculinity, which feed detached axiological neutrality toward "objects" as exaggerated agency aspirations in IR. The epistemological framing of sovereignty leads to a consideration of actors as pure and homogenous. Furthermore, it promotes emotional detachment toward other subjects and objects and considers them as manipulable. This epistemic misrecognition

favors international conflict as it reifies identities. It also legitimizes exploitation insofar as it implies instrumental thinking. For IPS, the sovereign ideal manifests in IR somewhat differently, with its emphasis on state authority and the will to act independently and dominantly over other actors. This norm has provided the rationale for ethnic purification inside states in order to stage the "homogenous" nation state. Moreover, the idea of the sovereign subject sustains the legitimation of international inequalities: impoverished populations are misrecognized and judged responsible for their supposed self-caused misery. Dominant "sovereign" actors suggest that others do not deserve recognition because they are unable to do their job.

A second topos of misrecognition for IPS is related to the denial of autonomy to given subjects. Epistemologically speaking, mainstream social science, particularly structural determinism, invisibilizes the subject. Agentic misrecognition is manifest here in positivist interpretations of international conflict, considering a great power conflict between the United States and China as unavoidable. Furthermore, it informs, oppressive structures of domination that seem "natural." While today, cultural violence (Galtung 1990) does not seem determined by God, it is often regarded as the unavoidable price of market forces in the development process. It is only when the subject discovers their agency—for instance, women in their contribution to the war machinery—that they develop a sense of worth and thus the injustice of their inferior social position.

A third topos of misrecognition for IPS concerns the denial of social agency. Actors, according to individualistic positivist approaches, are informed by the calculus of *homo politicus* or *homo economicus*. This version, again, is not only an epistemological attitude, but also it denies in practice the possibility of social links between actors. Following an IPS approach, this chapter has put forward the argument that intersubjective recognition always involves objects. Agentic misrecognition is ubiquitous to actors across borders and is expressed in the lack of self-determined work and the possibility to shape objects and subjects.

While this contribution has largely examined misrecognition of dominant actors, how would an IPS approach examine those that suffer misrecognition and have little agentic space? In the previous section, this chapter discussed how the desire for recognition through agency persists and may fuel resistances against globalization. While a subject's deprivation of agency across borders has contrasting effects—social groups do not necessarily oppose discriminating behavior or do it in a diverted manner against weaker agents (the Brexit vote was largely a working-class vote against migration)—strong asymmetric agency may, in the long run, collapse under the pressure of recognition struggles (Browning 2019). One of the conditions for dominated actors to achieve some self-consciousness and some degree of recognition is the discovery of their agency. Thus, agentic (mis)recognition is not opposed to distributive (in)justice but one of its discrete producers (Fraser and Honneth 2003).

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CHAPTER 12

VISUALIZING INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

From Visual Securitization to Visual Governance

WILLIAM A. CALLAHAN

INTRODUCTION

One of the exciting trends in the study of International Political Sociology (IPS) is the growing appreciation of the visual in global politics. Visual international politics (VIP) builds on path-breaking work on aesthetics and International Relations (IR) (see Bleiker 2012; Shapiro 2013) to examine how images shape our view of the world, especially in our post-literate age, where people primarily get their information about international affairs from visual media. As we will see, VIP is a vibrant part of IPS because it draws on theory and methods from visual sociology, visual anthropology, critical geopolitics, media studies, cultural studies, and art history (see Rose 2016; Pauwels 2015; Lawrence 2020; MacDonald, Hodges, and Dodds 2010; Mirzoeff 2015; Mitchell 2005) to examine issues of war, peace, security, migration, world order, and so on (see Bleiker 2018; Callahan 2020). Like in other IPS domains, there is particular attention to theorists such as Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari, with a particular interest in Rancière's (2004) idea of the "(re)distribution of the sensible."

VIP is also a site of debates raised in the book's "Intersubjectivity" section, with analysis that employs positivist, hermeneutic, and critical aesthetic sensibilities (see Shapiro 2013; Callahan 2020: 1–45). The introduction to the Intersubjectivity section shifts from framing politics in terms of rational individuals maximizing their exogenously given interests to focusing on how relational subjects engage in language games (Epstein and Jackson, this volume). This chapter, however, pushes beyond the focus on language to see how visual images not only linguistically (and ideologically) "mean" things but also can affectively "do" things in nonverbal and nonnarrative ways. While the Intersubjectivity section's introduction paradoxically critiques "US-centric IR" without appealing to any theories or examples beyond Euro-America, this chapter explores how images from Russia, Ukraine, and the Islamic State can help us to make theory in VIP and IPS (see Chen 2010; Euben 2006: 1–19).

The chapter first outlines VIP's analytical framework, which juxtaposes (i) the social construction of visual meaning (i.e. visibility) with (ii) the visual provocation of social

orders, world orders, and "affective communities of sense" (i.e. visuality). The idea is that visual images are more than an alternative form of language/text; they thus need to be appreciated in terms of not only what they mean but also how they make people feel. Then it analyzes a set of "Europe in 2035" maps to develop the visibility/visuality dynamic and to explore the nonverbal visceral politics of affect. It then uses the visibility strategy to examine a low-brow comedy movie, "The Interview" (Rogen and Goldberg 2014) as an example of visual securitization. Finally, the chapter explores videos from the Islamic State, moving beyond the hermeneutic strategies of "visual securitization" to consider the critical aesthetics of "visual governance." The conclusion summarizes the chapter, and discusses the strengths and weaknesses of VIP and IPS. It concludes that VIP needs to go beyond its focus on Western iconic images to better appreciate the everyday global politics of multisensory artifacts from non-Western sources.[1]

Visibility, visuality, and "Europe in 2035"

As mentioned above, VIP emerges from the "aesthetic turn" in IR, which argues that critical scholars need to resist the rational methods and the linear teleological narratives that frame our understanding of ourselves and the world. Here, "aesthetics" has two meanings: first, it works to include a wider array of sources for the study of international politics—for example, poetry, art, and film—and second, it highlights the interpretive aspects of politics (Bleiker 2012; Shapiro 1988, 2013). It argues that the practice of representation is the site of politics and examines how the meaning of an image is not referential to the "real" world but is intersubjectively constructed by the "who, when, where, and how" issues of the visual's production, distribution, and viewership (see Shapiro 1988; Mitchell 2005; Rose 2016; Bleiker 2012). This attention to the "social construction of the visible" is what I call the "visibility strategy": it sees images as another form of language, and its goal is to "think visually" in order to "speak truth to power" by revealing the state and corporate power relations behind the image (see Bleiker 2018; Campbell 2003; Hansen 2011; Harman 2019; Vuori and Andersen 2018; Callahan 2020: 19–31).

Alongside this interpretative approach that is inspired by hermeneutics, the critical aesthetic mode of analysis operationalizes "*aisthitikos*—the ancient Greek word/concept from which aesthetics is derived—[that] refers to the pre-linguistic, embodied, or feeling-based aspect of perception" (Shapiro 2013: 15). Because images can viscerally move us in unexpected and nonverbal ways, VIP aims to appreciate visuals not just in terms of their ideological value but also in terms of their affect work: not just what they mean, but also how they make people feel, both as individuals and as collectives (see Massumi 2002). While it's common to use positivist and hermeneutic methods to analyze visuals as representations of either truth or truth-claims, this approach to the "visual construction of the social" (Mitchell 2005: 343ff)—and of the multisensory provocation

of the international—works to question the hegemonic role of language in IPS analysis. Rather, the "visuality strategy" encourages researchers to "feel visually" in order to see how images viscerally move and connect people in "affective communities of sense" (Hutchison 2016; Rancière 2009: 31; Callahan 2020: 32–45). Hence, visuals don't just represent the international but can creatively provoke it: in the twenty-first century, to transform local political violence into a global political event, you need a visual (a video, a photograph, a cartoon, etc.) (Andersen 2015: 260).

To understand how VIP methods work, it is helpful to look at an odd set of maps called "Europe in 2035" that was published in 2012 (see Figure 12.1, Jacobs 2014). This exercise in medium-term futurology employs visual images not simply to represent the world or an ideology but to "do" something: to creatively make a new regional order and perhaps a new world order. Taking a positivist approach to VIP, we read the map in terms of its content and ask if it accurately represents what Europe might reasonably look like in 2035. In general, the maps show Western European nation-states fracturing along subnational lines (although Germany and Ireland expand), while Russian territory grows to include much of the former Soviet Union. Indeed, empirically speaking, the futurology project successfully predicted Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its subsequent invasion of the whole of Ukraine. Meanwhile, countries that have been "disloyal" to Moscow are dismembered: especially Poland, Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. As Frank Jacobs (2014) concludes in an online article about the maps in *Foreign Policy*, "This cartographic fantasy panders to Russia's foreign-policy frustrations by predicting future defeats for its 'enemies' and future victories for itself."

N
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ПОМЕРАНИЯ
ВОСТОЧНАЯ ПРУССИЯ
РОССИЯ
ГЕРМАНИЯ
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СИЛЕЗИЯ
ХЕЛМ
ГАЛИЧИНА
ЧЕХИЯ
КАРПАТСКАЯ РУСЬ
СЛОВАКИЯ
БУКОВИНА
АВСТРИЯ
ВЕНГРИЯ
СЛОВЕНИЯ
СЕВЕРНАЯ ЛИГА
РУМЫНИЯ
ХОРВАТИЯ
СЕРБИЯ
БОЛГАРИЯ
ЧЕРНОГОРИЯ
МАКЕДОНИЯ
ЮЖНАЯ ИТАЛИЯ
ВЕЛИКАЯ АЛБАНИЯ
ГРЕЦИЯ
СИЦИЛИЯ
0 km 100 200
0 miles 100 200

FIGURE 12.1 Europe in 2035: Map 2 (2012)

Source: Jacobs (2014).

Of course, it is easy to dismiss such maps as unscientific fantasies that are merely propaganda. Indeed, if we use the visibility strategy's hermeneutic methods to deconstruct the meaning of the maps, we can see how *Foreign Policy* was duped into broadcasting to an international audience the "fake news" of right-wing propaganda from Russia. Jacobs' English-language article reports on a Russian-language article from Russia's most popular sensationalist tabloid, *Ekspress Gazeta* (Ekspress Gazeta 2012). But *Express Gazeta* is not the original source for these maps, which first appeared on a popular Ukrainian website, *Obozrevatel'*. While the authorship of the *Express Gazeta* article is anonymous, the author of "Europe in 2035" in *Obozrevatel'* is Igor Lecev (2012), who describes himself as "a deeply intelligent, talented, and, above all, humble journalist. … who is passionate about literature (author of the novel '23'), horror films, and women." Hence, rather than present a sober analysis of Europe's future that is based on interpreting secret Russian intelligence sources, the "Europe in 2035" maps were created by a Ukrainian horror novelist. Although it appears to be an official plan for Putin's preferred future world order, it could very well be a prank.

But the impact of the "Europe in 2035" maps is not limited to empiricist questions of their scientific accuracy, hermeneutic questions of their secret hidden sources, or even to questions of authorial intent. The maps took on weight and influence not based on their truth-value or ideological-value, but as they circulated around cyberspace, first in Russian-language networks through the online tabloid newspaper and then around the world again through *Foreign Policy*'s online English-language article. Because of its prominent display on an influential Western media platform, the "Europe in 2035" maps then gained even more traction back in Russia. This (re)circulation of images underlines how visual artifacts can mobilize people in ways that are different from state policy decisions that are the result of rational policy analysis or critical textual analysis. Such "affective communities of sense" were excited not necessarily because the maps were given meaning by texts. Although the maps have textual labels, they are in Russian and thus, for an international audience, do not function as captions to anchor the images' meaning. People thus responded viscerally to what they saw rather than rationally to what they understood: it often made them feel "European" and/or "Russian" in new and different ways. The maps thus became important not due to their truth-value or ideological-value but through "their capacity for circulation and exchange" (Foucault 1972: 120).

The "Europe in 2035" episode also shows how almost anyone—including a young Ukrainian horror novelist—now can make a map that does things: here, provoking new social configurations of Russian–European–US relations far beyond the imagination or intent of any particular actor. This odd episode shows how visual images can work in nonnarrative and nonlinear ways to construct social relations by provoking emotions—pride, awe, disgust, outrage, fear, and hope—that are themselves political performances.

In this way, the "Europe in 2035" maps work to create new visions of social order and world order. The maps' revisioning of international borders is thus a "redistribution of the sensible" that complicates what can (and cannot) be seen, said, thought, and done (Rancière 2004: 13).

The visibility strategy: Visual securitization

Unlike other areas of IR that tend to ignore visuals, in critical security studies there has been much discussion of "visual securitization" and the international politics of images (see Bleiker 2018; Vuori and Andersen 2018). Securitization theory, especially the Copenhagen School, argues that security is "not an objective condition, but is the outcome of a specific social process" (Williams 2003: 513). Security issues are thus a social construction, where the issue is constituted—"securitized"— as an existential threat that requires emergency measures beyond normal political procedures and public debate. This is an intersubjective social process, where the issue is successfully securitized "only if and when the audience accepts it as such" (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998: 25). Securitization theory here looks to speech-act theory to argue that language does more than describe events; it can actively constitute a new social reality: for example, a president declaring war or signing a peace treaty (see Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998: 32).

Since it relies on speech-acts and rhetoric, securitization theory's focus on written and verbal texts seems like an odd choice for analysis of visual images. Thus, Lene Hansen's (2011, 2015, 2016) pioneering work on "visual securitization," which examines how securitization theory works differently with visual images, has been very influential. First, Hansen employs what I call the visibility strategy that treats images as texts to be "read" and thus critically interpreted. In particular, she examines how images' *immediacy*, *circulability*, and *ambiguity* challenge securitization theory's understanding of international politics. *Immediacy* here refers to time: through 24-hour news programs and social media platforms, images can appear very quickly. The temporal immediacy is also an emotional immediacy: iconic images, especially of death and violence, can provoke a more direct and immediate response from the viewer. This immediate response is both rational, in the sense that photographs are seen as reflections of the truth, and emotional because images of human faces can provoke identification with greater humanity (Hansen 2011: 56).

Second, Hansen (2011: 57) argues that the decentered and rapid *circulation* of images through modern media technologies problematizes "securitization theory's rather traditional notion of securitizing actors as political elites," where "security is constituted through an 'if–then' sequence where the[ir] constitution of threats legitimizes the adoption of emergency measures." As we saw in the last section, the "Europe in 2035" maps made a large security splash, even though they were not produced by an official

source as part of official policy. Visuals can have a more direct and broad influence than texts, Hansen argues, because the nonverbal nature of images means that they can more easily "transcend linguistic boundaries" and thus reach a broader and more diverse audience both locally and globally (Hansen 2011: 57).

This broader distribution of images across linguistic boundaries highlights Hansen's (2011: 57) third factor, *ambiguity*, because although "different audiences might 'see' the same image, they are unlikely to 'read' it in the exact same way." She also sees ambiguity in the sense that images are often focused on individuals, whereas securitization engages a collective: this is why it is important for the securitizing actor to have authority as the representative of a collective political or social group. Hansen thus argues that there is an "interpretive gap" between the individuals in the image and the collective. More importantly, while verbal securitization generally promotes a specific policy response, visual securitization can raise a set of problems but rarely provides a policy-relevant answer (Hansen 2011: 58).

Although Hansen's analysis might seem to raise a set of problems, she argues that this should not disqualify visual securitization. Rather than be a theoretical problem, these questions can be addressed through analysis of specific empirical case studies. In other words, the question is not whether or not visual images are securitized but *how* they are securitized, and how we can use the visibility strategy to "read" them.

Certainly, visual securitization works well to make sense of international politics seen in terms of elite political actors representing states. But does it work as well in the messy world of popular culture and cyberspace? "The Interview" (Rogen and Goldberg 2014), a feature film that was described as a "tepid, uninspired, and often crude comedy" (Erickson 2015: 37), presents an interesting case of how visual culture can get securitized in unexpected and unintentional ways (see Callahan 2020: 96–101). This satirical movie tells the story of how an elite American journalist is recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to poison North Korean leader Kim Jong-un during an exclusive interview in Pyongyang. Strangely, even before it was released, the film was securitized as the "US vs North Korea" narrative through a flurry of (i) diplomatic complaints from North Korea accusing the film of promoting "terrorism," (ii) statements by a North Korean hacker group that threatened to blow up US cinemas that showed the movie, and (iii) national security declarations by the US government defending the film's freedom of expression (see Sanger, Schmidt, and Perlroth 2014).

In terms of Hansen's new modalities of visual securitization, "The Interview" confirms that the *circulation* of images through modern media technologies challenges securitization theory's rather traditional notion of securitizing actors as political elites. As the movie shows, now we have nonelite producers of security images, where intentionality and policy relevance are hard to establish, if it exists at all. Here, comedians become security actors who are on a par with political leaders. Rather than security being the image's objective, the goals are financial (i.e. "Will it make money?") and aesthetic (i.e. "Is it funny?"). Securitization thus is an unintended consequence of the

film. Rather than the image representing a securitizing event, the film itself became the securitizing event for the United States and North Korea—and, since the film was made by two Canadians (Rogen and Goldberg) for a Japanese corporation (SONY), it is not entirely clear who is securitizing whom.

The *immediacy* argument is also problematic. Although the film's trailer was available online in summer 2014, the film itself was not immediately available to watch when the controversy erupted. The main motivation for securitization actually was the "invisibility" of the film rather than its immediate visibility. After Sony cancelled its theater release in December 2014, people couldn't see it at all—and it was only available for streaming a few months later. "The Interview" was thus not an intentional securitization, and it took months to get securitized and continued to get re-securitized for many more months.

The film, however, is a good example of Hansen's discussion of the political *ambiguities* provoked by comedy: audiences can read the same image differently. In the United States, "The Interview" was a low-brow comedy, while in North Korea, it was seen as an outrageous security threat. The film was offensive because it attacked the sacred image of the North Korean leader. Pyongyang's response then attacked the United States' sacred value of free expression. Hence irony, satire, and humor—which are unstable modes that are not easily translated—provoke the possibility of multiple readings of the film. While declarations of war are clear examples of using language to securitize IR, images don't work in the same way: as Hansen explains, we have to interpret images on a case-by-case basis.

Although Hansen argues that visual securitization is an empirical issue rather than a theoretical problem, what if the theory—that is, the visibility strategy's hermeneutic approach of reading visual securitization—is the problem?

Visual governance

While securitization theory sees "security" as an unstable discourse that needs to be socially constructed, the theory relies on a certain stability of the state, sovereignty, and the image. Actors securitize the image on behalf of the state in a recognized process; or an image is securitized and the state has to respond. But what if we turn the question around to query the stability of the state, sovereignty, and the image? Here, we move from analyzing the social construction of the visual as a security problem to seeing how an unstable visuality governs the state and sovereignty as contingent events. Theoretically, we are moving from documenting securitization as a foreign policymaking practice to tracing patterns of visual governance that work in the different registers of social ordering and world ordering. As Jacques Rancière (2011: 103) explains, images "do not simply supply weapons for battles … [Rather, they] help sketch new

configurations of what can be seen, what can be said and what can be thought and, consequently a new landscape of the possible."

To appreciate the critical aesthetics approach to VIP, the ideas cultural governance and visual governance are useful (see Shapiro 2004; Campbell 2003). Rather than taking the "nation" for granted as an actor in a rational calculus, Michael J. Shapiro sees the nation as a set of unstable social relations that take on coherence through cultural governance. This cultural governance looks to Michel Foucault's (1991) understanding of power as a productive force that is generated by contingent social relationships rather than as a set of juridical practices of sovereignty that restrict action. Shapiro (2004: 34) argues that while, for the early-modern state, sovereignty relied on "military and fiscal initiatives," by the nineteenth century, these "coercive and economic aspects of control have been supplemented by a progressively intense cultural governance … aimed at making territorial and national/cultural boundaries coextensive." But Shapiro (2004: 49) does not simply chart out the productive power of state-led cultural governance; his critical approach highlights the relationality of power/resistance to show how resistance can emerge through other modalities of expression—films, journals, diaries, novels, and counter-historical narratives—that "challenge the state's coherence-producing writing performances."

The next section explores the Islamic State's videos to examine how this cultural governance can involve visual governance, especially when the videos move and connect people in an affective community of sense.

The visuality strategy: Visually governing the Islamic State

The Islamic State (IS) sees media not simply as propaganda but as a "battlefield" that is nearly as important as the military battlefield: as the title of an official IS handbook puts it, *O Media Worker, You are a Mujahid!* While Salafi-jihadi movements have utilized media technologies to creatively distribute their messages for decades, IS is noteworthy for both the high quality of its visual products and for its effective use of social media technology to disseminate them. According to one source, between January 2014 and August 2016, IS produced over 9,000 video products (Kraidy 2017: 1199). Its media strategy, which worked to both recruit fighters and intimidate enemies, was reasonably successful: by 2017, over 30,000 people had traveled to join the IS (Monaci 2017: 2857).

IS media thus has been a key site for analysis of visual securitization, with particular attention to the visuality of its execution videos. The political violence of beheading was not new, but its global visibility through IS videos certainly was a new development. To understand this new global media strategy, Roxanne L. Euben (2017), Simone Molin Friis (2015, 2018), and Sara Monaci (2017) each analyze key IS videos where people are beheaded or burned alive. Rather than look for the political meaning of the videos as

"tactics" in order to craft proper policy responses, Euben (2017: 1007) argues that we need to examine how the videos "work" as visual modes of violence that "constitute visceral power." Here, we move from the visibility strategy to the visuality strategy: rather than focus on tracing the social construction of the visual, the analytical task is to appreciate the creative visual governance of the social and of the international. Indeed, Euben (2017: 1008) argues that the "videos are verbally parsimonious, using images, quick cuts, composition, blocking, pacing, resolution, sound/silence, camera angles, dress, and casting, to 'speak' as much as words." These visual artifacts work less through instrumental rationality and more through affective resonance, in resonance's literal sense of "evoking a response" (Euben 2017: 1026). As Kraidy (2017: 1198) explains, in execution videos images "do not represent an object, but rather are part of an operation" that "connect[s] processes, events and bodies." As with the visuality strategy's approach, Euben (2017: 1009) argues that an appreciation of the nonverbal and nonnarrative audio-visual politics of these execution videos allows us to "document how visual images can reshape interpretive frameworks that, in turn, reconstitute the realm of what is politically thinkable and doable."

What is newly "politically thinkable and doable" in these execution videos? It is the founding of the IS as the Caliphate. In an argument shared with other analysts, Euben sees execution videos as political rituals meant to constitute the sovereign power of the IS as the Caliphate. Here, she follows Foucault's (1977: 24) analysis of sovereignty as the power over death, where political legitimacy is produced through the public spectacle of executing the human body. The focus of such executions, either in eighteenth-century France or the twenty-first-century Middle East, is not on the executioner or the executed. Rather, the focus is on the audience (both local and global) that is relationally hailed by the ritualized spectacle to recognize and swear allegiance to the new ruling state power (Euben 2017: 1021). In this way, the visual relationally produces both the state and the faithful public. Kraidy (2017: 1202) explains that "[t]he video showcases IS as a state," while Mello (2018: 145) declares that "violent execution videos produce in this public faith in the status and power of the Islamic State." The execution videos thus are not simply "random brutality" but are a practice of visual governance that produces sovereign power through the production and circulation of the videos (Friis 2018: 248). The videos don't just engage in the IS securitizing its enemies—or even in provoking the United States and the United Kingdom to securitize the IS (Friis 2015: 736; Euben 2017: 1009; Mello 2018)—but through visual governance, they actively provoke social orders and world orders as affective communities of sense.

Much of the analysis of the execution videos concerns whether (or not) they present IS as a dystopia of overwhelming savagery—characterized by beheadings, slavery, and other examples of extreme violence. Kraidy (2017: 1025), for example, argues that while "Hollywood, for the most part, seeks to impart enjoyment, IS seeks to inflict pain." Euben (2017: 1010) explains that the beheading videos work to enact "retaliatory humiliation … not by way of explicit argument, but through the visual inscription of

impotence upon male bodies whose public subjugation and abjection is symbolically converted into that of the American nation." Such conclusions are drawn from a close analysis of IS's violent films; Friis (2018: 246), for example, spent 2 years studying 985 IS videos of public violence, including an "in-depth analysis of 185 of the group's execution videos."

Visual governance through public service announcement videos

Yet, execution videos are but one genre in IS's rich and varied video repertoire. Its media centers have also produced a host of what could be characterized as public service announcements (PSAs) that present IS as a utopian project for an alternative social order and world order; that is an actually existing Caliphate. The strategy of previous Islamic terror groups, including Al-Qaeda, focused on creating chaos, with the Caliphate as a vague goal for the long-term future. On the other hand, IS videos work to create a Caliphate in the here and now, as a utopian project that relationally hails Muslims throughout the world.

According to Charlie Winter's (2015: 30) analysis, most of IS's media products can be characterized as "utopian," focusing on issues of governance, morality, justice, economy, physical infrastructure, and social welfare. In addition to tearing down the *ancien regime*, videos show how IS also engages in state-building, society-building, and world-building. What is most interesting about the IS media strategy is that it works not just to create a sovereign "state" (as argued above) but to create a utopian one that is "Islamic": one of the main tasks of IS media products is to "persuade all Muslims [that] battling to restore a caliphate is a religious duty" (Farwell 2014: 49).

While many scholars focus on the savagery of public violence, here I follow those who look at the visual politics of everyday life in war zones. In this way, we can see how the IS engages in "rebel governance" to assert itself as a legitimate state through not only military conquest but also social welfare provision (Martinez and Eng 2018; Brenner 2019). In Syria, it has long been the state's job to provide social welfare to the population, including free health care and subsidized oil and food. Indeed, during the Syrian civil war in the 2010s, hospitals and bakeries were strategic sites both in the sense that rival regimes (the Assad regime; the Kurdish People's Defense Unit (YPG); the Free Syrian Army; and armed Islamist groups, including IS) competed for civilian loyalty by devoting scarce resources to hospitals and bakeries, and in the sense that the Assad regime and IS deliberately destroyed hospitals and bakeries to undermine their rivals (Martinez and Eng 2018). Thus, war is not just between armed groups but also takes place in everyday life struggles.

The IS's PSAs are thus a key site of the visuality of war, especially when they celebrate the IS's rebel governance of health and food in order to create a utopian society. For these videos, the search for legitimacy switches from the sovereign's power

over death (which characterizes late-medieval/early modern European politics) to what Foucault sees as the modern administrative state's biopolitical project of nurturing populations. He argues that in the modern era, "the function of pastoral power has spread far beyond the church to inform the state's modes of managing society" (Foucault 1982: 214). Here, the theo-political state administers not just the spiritual needs of its population but also the population's everyday material and cultural needs. These PSAs show the day-to-day rebel governance of society; but as creative products themselves, they are an important part of visual governance in ways that are both very pious and very modern (and modernistic). They hail audiences both within the IS and outside it, in a battle of visualities that looks to the visual governance of everyday life.

FIGURE 12.2 Screenshot of "Health Services in the Islamic State" (2015)

While the IS stresses that it is completely different from European secular states, its video "Health Services in the Islamic State" (Jihadology 2015a) draws interesting parallels with the West. Indeed, the IS Health Service logo (ISHS) will be familiar to people in the United Kingdom: it closely mirrors the logo of the National Health Service (NHS) (see Figure 12.2). The video starts in the hermeneutic style of a pious doctor at Al-Raqqah General Hospital explaining how the ISHS worked to overcome obstacles to benefit the people and thus produce the legitimacy of the IS. To prove how the ISHS is working at a global level that includes specialized care, the video gives the viewer a tour of the hospital, which is also a medical school. Certainly, the hospital is caring for war casualties; but the head doctor stresses that the intensive care unit also works to heal

people with "injuries from car accidents, poison, burns, trauma, brain damage, nerve damage, and surgical complications." The video thus makes visible the virtuous pastoral work done by the IS.

Here, the verbal information is complemented by visual affect work: we see injured and sick people being cared for, including heart-wrenching clips of little children and old people. Actually, the affect work precedes the ideological work: the first minute of the 15-minute film is an audio-video collage of film clips from around the hospital set to the beat of an electrocardiogram beep (the graph of which is animated over the images, see Figure 12.2) and the harmony of a pious *anashid* (an a capella religious song). It is a music video in a fast-cut MTV style that edits together clips of ambulances, doctors in scrubs, and premature infants in incubators in ways that stylistically reference Western medical TV dramas. The video's introduction ends with the music fading out, to focus first on an ambulance racing up to the hospital and then on paramedics rushing the injured person into the emergency room.

The head doctor's testimony and the tour of the hospital wards are all done with high production values: like with the execution videos, the Health Service video employs multiple cameras, "quick cuts, composition, blocking, pacing, resolution, sound/silence, camera angles, dress, and casting, to 'speak' as much as words" (Euben 2017: 1018). But here, rather than using violence to medievally mutilate the human body as a means of asserting the sovereign power over death, the video uses high-tech, life-saving techniques to heal human bodies in the IS as a biopolitical utopia. While many analyze the ideology of IS videos to probe their effectiveness in recruiting warriors, this video uses affective work to attract life-giving medical professionals to the IS utopia. A multinational set of doctors hail their medical colleagues in the West to join the multinational ISHS, and thus pledge allegiance to the IS.

The video ends much as it began, with a collage of images from the Al-Raqqah General Hospital; except this time, the images do not stress crisis but happiness and contentment: the doctors who were interviewed in the video are shown in slow motion smiling and laughing, crosscut with clips of vulnerable infants who are under their care, against the catchy soundtrack of an *anashid*. The IS here is a productively healthy utopia full of people working together for the good life and succeeding in pious triumph: the IS flag waves in the video's upper left corner (also see Gerges 2016: 228). As an artifact of creative cultural governance, this video works to hail various audiences—primarily from outside the IS—to support the IS as a legitimate utopian state.

Videos of the IS's administration of food are also good examples of rebel governance, visual governance, and biopolitical utopia. Actually, it is a bit more complicated because the two films—"Food Security" (Jihadology 2015c) and "The Administration of Bakeries and Ovens" (Jihadology 2015b)—show a tension between visual securitization and visual governance. "Food Security," not surprisingly, starts with military security issues: a black-and-white clip of President Obama announcing airstrikes against the IS, and then black-and-white images of war and destruction from the IS point of view. The

video is narrated with a declaration of the IS's goal "to protect its soldiers, borders, and to protect the Muslims."

However, this protection is not only a military project but also pastoral in the sense of protecting food security. The video soon switches (like in "The Wizard of Oz") from black-and-white to color images of a combine harvesting wheat, underlining how farmers are warriors in the battle to "maintain and expand" the IS. The film then engages in a fascinating PSA tour of the food industry in Ḥalab province. Although not exactly a statement of "Organic IS," it does present a "farm-to-table" process video of life in the IS.

It visually traces how wheat is grown, harvested, and ground into flour, which is then made into dough that is, in turn, baked to make pita bread. The clips show how this pita bread is stacked, weighed, bagged, and loaded onto a truck for distribution. As the narrator explains, "the Administration of Mills and Bakeries takes responsibility for delivering bread to the homes of Muslims in remote villages and far areas." But actually, the narration is moot, because we see the trucks going down long, dusty roads to deliver bread to happy and grateful families (which has parallels with the production and distribution of the video itself). It presents life in the IS as "paradise" in the sense of an Islamic garden (based on the Garden of Eden) that is well irrigated and full of flora and fauna, sweet honey, juicy fruits, and crunchy nuts (see Clark 1996). The off-screen narrator concludes, "The province of Ḥalab had what other provinces had: food security. And this is due to God's grace and his luck, thank you God for what you have graced us with."

The other food PSA, "The Administration of Bakeries and Ovens in Wilāyat al-Raqqah" (Jihadology 2015b), is even more interesting because the verbal-ideological aspect seems to be an after-thought. The first two minutes of this five-minute video present a series of audio-video clips that show the bakery production of pita bread in even more detail than in "Food Security," and without any narration at all. It is a well-crafted video that uses all the techniques discussed above to produce a PSA/music video that is not only informative but aesthetically pleasing (see Figure 12.3). The process video style of visualizing how things are made (see Lawrence 2020: 2–25) is an effective (and affective) way of hailing audiences both inside and outside the IS. This style is also popular in other countries, where bakery process videos are used to move and connect audiences for projects as diverse as welfare for adults with learning disabilities in Edinburgh and Muslim Uyghurs in concentration camps in Northwest China (Fedda 2007; Chinese Central Television Channel 13 2018). In these examples, as well as in IS videos, populations perform bread-making as happy and healthy participants in a greater (utopian) project.

FIGURE 12.3 Screenshot of "The Administration of Bakeries and Ovens" (2015)

In "The Administration of Bakeries and Ovens," the narrator appears on screen quite late on (and soon disappears behind the B-roll of bakery-process clips). Importantly, he explains how the IS is concerned not only with the quantity of food but also its quality: "As for the quality of bread in the bakeries of the Islamic State, praise to God, where we have standards for the quality of the bread, high-quality standards for bread." Like a proper pastoral state, these quality-control mechanisms guarantee the safety of bread and other necessary foodstuffs. By producing food through rebel governance, the IS produces power through visual governance. Once again, these videos show how the IS is not simply a sovereign state that gains legitimacy through its control over death but also, and at the same time, a biopolitical state that nurtures the life of its growing population. As the health and food videos show, this biopower is both pious and modern and displays the IS as a legitimate utopian state: the twenty-first-century Caliphate. As with the health video, the food videos are examples of creative visual governance that work to hail specific audiences to support the IS's utopian social-ordering and world-ordering projects.

These films are disseminated through the IS's global multimedia network, which includes promotion on top-ten video lists and prominent tie-in articles in its flagship monthly glossy magazine, *Dabiq*. This intervisuality among different platforms produces a "global networked affect" (Kraidy 2017: 1198) of the IS not simply as a sovereign state that relies on savage violence but also as a biopolitical utopia where people viscerally feel at home. IS video PSAs thus provide a good example of the audio-visual

as an affective mode that "does" things through visual governance. This visual social-ordering and world-ordering project moves and connects people first emotionally to support the IS, and then materially when they migrate to the IS to live the good life in the Caliphate. These PSAs hailed audiences both inside the IS to cultivate loyalty and legitimacy among the civilian population, and outside the IS to attract pious professionals to join the utopian project. Rather than being an issue of security or securitization, it shows how visual governance in war zones can provoke new social orders and world orders as affective communities of sense.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored VIP's contribution to IPS through an analysis of the connections between visibility, visuality, security, and governance. It introduces VIP's visibility/visuality conceptual scheme to compare visual securitization and visual governance as two approaches to appreciating the political work of images. Securitization theory is useful for unpacking how visual images can shape foreign policy events through their immediacy, circulation, and ambiguity. But the chapter uses the security crisis provoked by the feature film "The Interview" to question securitization's focus on the state and official elites, and the close relation between existential threats and security problems. It then outlines how visual governance can better address the political problems provoked in less official spaces, like popular culture and cyberspace, especially when they impact the wider issues of social ordering and world ordering. In this way, the chapter shows, on the one hand, the visibility strategy's hermeneutic approach to reading visual securitization and, on the other, the visuality strategy's attention to the broader issues of how images can actively provoke affective communities of sense that complicate what can (and cannot) be seen, said, thought, and done.

To push beyond the visibility strategy's ideological questions—and the Intersubjectivity section's focus on language—the chapter examines the audio-visual affective politics of IS videos. It argues that the IS is a strong example of visual governance: between 2014 and 2019, we witnessed the creation (and then destruction) of a sovereign state. This was not simply a military conquest of territory; the IS devoted scarce resources to building legitimacy through rebel governance and media products, including professional-quality videos that were disseminated through a global-affect network. In critical security studies, analysts have shown how the extreme violence of IS videos works to assert sovereignty through control over death. This chapter argues that we also need to look beyond the shock of savage violence to see how IS videos work through the pastoral politics of visual governance to create a biopolitical utopia. Certainly, we can understand IS PSAs in terms of securitization, for example food security. But the chapter argues that the broader conceptual framework of visual

governance allows us to better appreciate the IS as a utopian project of social ordering and world ordering in affective communities of sense.

This chapter shows the strengths and weaknesses of IPS and VIP research in ways that resonate with the challenges faced by the popular culture and world politics (PCWP) approach to IR. According to Rhys Crilley (2021: 164), scholars need to better address "(1) race, colonialism, and intersectionality in PCWP; (2) the impact of digital technology on PCWP; (3) the audience interpretation of PCWP; and (4) practices of making and producing PCWP." Point 1: the main source of VIP analysis is Euro-American images, and to decolonize the discipline scholars need to include more and better images from other places. In other words, critical analysis of Western images of the non-Western "Other" is important, but not sufficient. As this chapter has shown, images from Russia, Ukraine, and the IS don't just provide "data." They also help us to critically question the theory and methods derived from Euro-American images and experiences (see Chen 2010; Euben 2006: 1–19). Points 2 and 3: VIP is good at addressing digital technology in the sense of analyzing how web-based images circulate. But its interpretive approach would benefit from a more pluralistic appreciation of method that includes both qualitative analysis of meaning and quantitative analysis of impact, including large-N audience studies (see Bleiker 2015). Point 4: there is a growing trend that shifts from understanding intersubjectivity in terms of language and then interpreting visual images as texts to taking photographs and making films as research activities in and of themselves. This is a positive development, which needs to be further encouraged.

In addition to these PCWP issues, VIP also needs to expand from its focus on iconic images of security, war, and violence to appreciate a wider range of sources of the global politics of the everyday. Indeed, the focus on "visual" and "images" is too narrow and would benefit from an expansion to analysis of multisensory images, artifacts, and experiences: audio-visual media, Karaoke, memes, architecture, soundscapes, collages, walls, gardens, and so on (Brenner 2019; Brennan 2015; Bell and Zacka 2020; Weitzel 2018; Särmä 2018; Callahan 2020). In this way, VIP can better appreciate politics in terms of "redistributions of the sensible" that call into question settled modes of thinking and feeling.

Note

1. Many thanks to Daniel Fitter for translating Russian-language sources. Since the Arabic sources are from Islamic State videos, for security reasons I do not name the translation company.

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PART III

HISTORICISM

CHAPTER 13

WHAT IS 'HISTORICISM'?

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of this chapter is to frame the following chapters on the possible uses of 'historicism' and 'historicist approaches' in International Political Sociology (IPS). Following Bevir, we understand historicism broadly as "a philosophy that emphasizes the importance of history in understanding, explaining, or evaluating phenomena," and we agree with him that "[h]istoricists need not study the past" (Bevir 2017: 1). 'Historicism' is not always understood in this broad manner, however. Over the course of its history, it has meant very different things to people in different disciplines, national contexts, and time periods, often coming to label schools within various disciplines with specific and contested philosophies of history (see also Schlichte and Stetter 2023). Therefore, before we can establish what 'historicism' means in the context of IPS, we first need to agree on what historicism means in the broader context of the humanities and social sciences.

In its nineteenth-century origins, historicism was a broad research program fighting for the autonomy of history as an independent area of study, with its own methods and goals, not reducible to those of the natural sciences, and as distinct from those of metaphysics (Steinmetz 2020: 63–66). Early historicists generally rejected naturalistic or providential explanations for historical events. They also generally believed in continuous historical change and thus argued for the need to understand human institutions in their specific social-historical contexts. But even back then, there wasn't a clear consensus on who was a historicist or what the proper methods of history should be. For example, while many considered Marx or Hegel to be historicists, others disagreed. Many historicists saw Hegel as their main enemy until Comte and the positivists emerged as the primary foil (Steinmetz 2020).

Time has not necessarily increased clarity around the label. As historicism was taken up as an approach by other disciplines besides history in the humanities (e.g. philosophy or theology) and the social sciences (e.g. economics, law, or sociology), the label acquired additional, often contradictory, meanings. For example, in *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957), Karl Popper associated historicism primarily with more metaphysical historical approaches such as Marxism and charged it with the sin of what

he considered to be the futile ambition of making predictions about the future and especially about the end state of human nature. By contrast, around the same time as Popper wrote *The Poverty of Historicism*, Leo Strauss (1953) was damning "Weberian historicism" for leading to moral relativism. In other words, as disciplines evolved, historicism and historicists continued to be attacked for being both too morally proscriptive and too morally relativistic.[1]

Unsurprisingly, the field of International Relations (IR), and by extension IPS, have imported some of this confusion regarding historicism and historical methods as they imported historiographical approaches and debates from other disciplines. This chapter breaks through this confusion by discussing some of the primary debates about historicism in some of the different fields and sub-fields studying the international. The second section provides a brief overview of how 'historicism' has been discussed within IR, specifically within the context of the recent 'historical turn.' The third section broadens the debate about 'historicism' beyond IR to other fields such as history and those focused on pattern-seeking in the exploration of historical and social dynamics. Here, historicism means recognizing that social phenomena differ across time and place. Yet, historicism as an approach to the social sciences is not maximally 'historicist' in that it still aims to compare and arrive at conclusions that are not entirely contingent. The fourth section provides an overview of how historicism is used in the study of the history of political thought and points to another way IPS can incorporate historicism. The most common type of historicist approach utilized by intellectual historians is contextualism, the use of which involves confronting larger debates about interpretivism in social sciences. Historicism in this sense, then, can underpin interpretive approaches to IPS.

'Historicism' in IR

A number of stock-taking exercises have already categorized the different types of historical research in IR, so in this section, rather than reinventing the wheel, we summarize some of these existing typologies. The challenge identified in most of these surveys is one of balance: in incorporating a historicist sensitivity into IR without entirely giving up IR's ambition to identify broader patterns (see also Leira and de Carvalho 2017).

In "What Is History in International Relations?," Hobson and Lawson (2008: 420) identify four modes of history in the study of IR: " 'history without historicism', 'historicist historical sociology', 'radical historicism', and 'traditional history'." Under the label "history without historicism," they include neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism, noting that in this mode, "history takes on the role of 'scripture'—as the application of 'lessons' and inviolate rules that can be used to inform current policy and support research hypotheses" (Hobson and Lawson 2008: 423). Hobson and Lawson

contrast "history without historicism" with "radical historicism," which they describe as a "deep contextualism, one which finds its clearest expression in the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida" (Hobson and Lawson 2008: 423). Yet another pole is occupied by "traditional historians" who reject the theoretical templates of the first camp, which puts them closer to "radical historicism." Traditional historians, as Hobson and Lawson describe them, are not committed to a critical deconstructionism (Hobson and Lawson 2008: 426). The fourth mode of historical analysis in IR identified (and favored) by the authors is "historicist historical sociology," as exemplified by the works of E. H. Carr or Quentin Skinner. Hobson and Lawson argue that this fourth mode is the best of all worlds, because "historicist historical sociologists accept that history is knowable but, pace traditional historians, they insist that historians cannot claim to be speaking an objective truth insofar as history is produced within a certain time and place and subject to the interpretations of its practitioners" (Hobson and Lawson 2008: 429). They also share with radical historicists the goal of deconstructing Eurocentric narratives, but still with the hope that better narratives can be constructed. Hobson and Lawson also observe that such an "approach recognises the role of accident, contingency, agency, contextuality and particularity alongside that played by structure and continuity" (Hobson and Lawson 2008: 429).

In a follow-up article, "The Eternal Divide? History and International Relations," Lawson argues that IR's approach to history is caught between two unsatisfactory understandings: seeing history either as "a predetermined site for empirical verification of abstract claims" or as "the 'if only' realm of uncertainty … a 'butterfly' of contingent hiccups upon which IR theorists provide ill-fitting maps" (Lawson 2012: 204–205). The former suffers from ahistoricism, whereas the latter suffers from the opposite: "where the 'history as scripture' approach is historical without being historicist, the 'history as butterfly' approach is historicist without being historical, focusing on deconstruction without reconstructing meaningful analytical narratives. Neither provides much help in terms of building durable links between history and IR theory" (Lawson 2012: 210). To improve IR's relationship with history, Lawson suggests a number of mechanisms drawn from history and social science: "context, narrative, eventfulness and ideal-typification" (Lawson 2012: 214). The best example of paying attention to context in IR comes via "association with the Cambridge School of historians as represented by figures such as Quentin Skinner, J.G.A. Pocock and John Dunn" (Lawson 2012: 216; see also Reus Smit 2008 for the linkages between constructivism and the Cambridge School). Paying attention to events focuses us on regularities and assemblages, which "constitute relatively stable sites for the development of what Duncan Bell (2009, 19) calls 'creole communities' or 'contact languages' between social science and history" (Lawson 2012: 218).[2] Narratives provide another bridge (Lawson 2012: 219), as do ideal-types, which "act as simplified maps of historical reality with the goal of specifying causal configurations,

which, in turn, act as 'portable knowledge' in alternative cases" (Lawson 2012: 221). In sum, these are tools that IR can use to strike that elusive historicist balance.

More recently, Joseph MacKay and Christopher David LaRoche locate IR's historical commitments in a typology, identifying six ideal-typical categories along two axes. They argue that "history can be theorized as linear, nonlinear, or multilinear, and as familiar or unfamiliar" (MacKay and LaRoche 2017: 205). The implications for historicism are not necessarily drawn out, but it is evident that some ideal-types would necessarily demand more historicist approaches. Yet, it is really only one of their ideal-types that would preclude it altogether: nonlinear/familiar, which is described as having a philosophy of history as "largely static or cyclical; familiar and unchanging—e.g. realism, hegemonic transition theories" (MacKay and LaRoche 2017: 212, figure 1). We note the overlap here with the history as scripture approach (Hobson and Lawson 2008; Lawson 2012). Despite occupying only one out of six possible positions as identified by MacKay and LaRoche, these types of ahistoricist approaches dominated mainstream IR for much of the last half of the twentieth century.

To some extent, IR's position toward historicism is captured in these typologies. The self-identified 'scientific' side of IR tends to ignore historicist sensitivities in search of 'data', whereas critical approaches can suffer from an overdose of historicism. However, it is also true that the 'historical turn' in IR has followed either Hobson and Lawson's "historicist historical sociology" playbook (see e.g. Barkawi 2017; Buzan and Lawson 2015; Hobson 2004, 2012, 2020; Lawson 2019; Phillips 2010, 2021; Phillips and Sharman 2015; Reus-Smit 1999, 2013; Sharman 2019; Sharman and Phillips 2020; Spruyt 2020; Zarakol 2011, 2022) or the contextual approaches of (or adjacent to) the Cambridge School (see e.g. Bartelson 2017; Bell 2016, 2020; Getachew 2019; Rosenboim 2017, etc.) in taking historicism seriously without altogether giving up the ambition to speak beyond the particular. Much of what has been labelled as "International Political Sociology" in IR, however, does not feature in this list, but many of these works are sociological in their approach. In the conclusion, we suggest that IPS can grow in this direction. After all, many of the authors that the IR IPS tradition draws from based their theories on particular readings of history (see e.g. Foucault 2001 [1966]; Baudrillard 1994; Bourdieu 2010 [1979]; Said 1978; Agamben 1998, etc.) But first, the next sections broaden our view beyond IR.

Historians' critiques of 'historicism' in the social sciences

As noted in the introduction, historicism can mean something straightforward: that social relations are historical and located in time and space. The term also carries the meaning of change or development, driven by some determinate set of forces, as in Marxism. But historicism remains a many-sided and contradictory concept in social and political inquiry. This arises, at least in part, from the implications of historical

specificity (the idiographic) for the generalizing, pattern-seeking purposes of social scientists (the nomothetic). What are the relations between historical specificity and general patterns or common structures? To what degree, and with what significance, are things always different across distinct times and places? In what ways can they be said to have similarities or be connected? Notions of historicism and historicity try to answer these questions. In so doing, they serve as switch points, mediating between the specific and the general in diverse disciplinary fields.

Positivism, or at least a potted version of it, provides a useful foil for drawing out what a historicist approach in social science involves. This is, in part, because these traditions developed together, in reaction to one another (Steinmetz 2020). In seeking general explanations, and in making a sharp distinction between theory and fact, positivism requires concepts and definitions that hold across contexts. 'History' can be mined for facts only if those facts can be clearly defined. Only then can they be identified, collected, and coded for use in empirical studies; that is, positivism is ahistorical in principle in its approach to historical data and predictions. History is a kind of meta-container of facts, and the main problem is rigorously collecting them.

In contrast, historicism begins with the insight that, although comparable, social phenomena differ across time and place. Fixed definitions risk misrecognizing or mis-characterizing facts and social relations. For example, conceptions of democracy change over time and/or place such that what 'democracy' consists of, what it means, differs in essential respects. Historicism would approach democracy in context, as having different meanings in different contexts, even opposed meanings. By contrast, for a thoroughgoing positivist, it does not matter what term you use to name the observable phenomena referred to by the term 'democracy'. You could call it an "x-ocracy" (Rummel 1997: 12). If you define 'democracy' in observable terms, consisting of categories of identifiable facts (such as elections or the percentage of citizens who have the franchise), then you can make comparisons and predictions about 'democracy' across time and place in deductive-nomological terms (Hempel 1965). The nub of the distinction between positivism and historicism revolves around whether or not you think social phenomena can be understood and studied in this way.

The stakes for IR become clear when we consider war and warfare, for example, and the databases used to study them in political science. Correlates of War (CoW), the most prominent of them, defines war as a year-long period involving at least 1,000 battle deaths among the armed forces of combatant polities (Sarkees and Wayman 2010). Accordingly, historical research means rigorously finding this data in order to determine whether a 'war' occurred. CoW defines interstate war as war between two or more sovereign states, while civil war occurs within the territory of a sovereign state. An evolving category of extra-systemic/extra-state war is used for those conflicts that do not fit. By fixing the definitions of sovereign states and of wars across time and place, a war becomes an observable fact. Claims can be made about the incidence and rates of types of 'war' in widely different times and places. These claims can be

mobilized as facts requiring theoretical explanation. Examples include the putative decline of interstate war and the rise in civil war since 1945 or that no two states coded as democratic have waged interstate war on one another since the data begin (Braumoeller 2019; Russett 1993). CoW data is rigorously collected and revised, but within its own terms. For CoW, states and wars are defined by the same criteria across time and place; that is the entire point of the database. Competing databases which tweak definitions or more rigorously collect data from, say, non-Western cases does not differ in principle in this respect (Lyall 2020; Reiter, Stam, and Horowitz 2016). War is not something that changes and has histories of its own. In its defining features, each war is essentially the same as another, subject to variation in the number of combatants and casualties.

By contrast, for historians and historical sociologists, warfare evolves over time and place, and what a war might consist of changes, more or less fundamentally. For example, a long-running tradition of inquiry looks at the industrialization and totalization of conventional warfare over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Warfare among great powers evolved in scale, scope, and quality, interacting with mass society and the state as well as technology and the economy (Brodie 1973; Buzan and Lawson 2015; Malesevic 2010; McNeill 1982). From such a perspective, it makes little sense to define the Second World War as a single data point, another interstate war like any other in the CoW database. Similarly, the advent of nuclear weapons changed the nature and character of war as an institution in the international system in ways that can be debated. Some argued that the point of strategy was now to deter rather than win wars, while others held that nuclear weapons gave new significance to proxy conflicts (Brodie 1946; Aron 1968). The underlying point is that war is historical—it changes and develops. The task for analysis is to understand the nature of these changes and their motive forces. On this view, fixed, ahistorical definitions of 'war' mischaracterize the phenomenon to which they refer. Attention to historical context is necessary to understand what war is in any given instance and how it develops and changes over time and place.

Historicism can inform conceptions of state formation as well as economic and social development across the social sciences, but even historicist approaches can overgeneralize at times or become reductive. Examples include the idea that societies progress from 'tradition' to 'modernity' or that economies develop from primitive accumulation to feudalism to capitalism. These sorts of stadial or stagist theories of social development are, to some extent, historicist in nature because they combine the notion of change over time with teleological conceptions of the direction of that change. These kinds of approaches often inform nation-state ontologies of world politics. In this analysis, different states and societies are seen to be at different stages of development. They can be plotted against one another such that some are "backward" while others are "advanced" or "developed," This type of historicism is in tension with the norms of most historians (especially today) because it becomes too reductive in its attempt to

generalize. As Sarah Maza (2017: 164) remarks of historians, their "purpose is not to extract from one historical situation a generalization that can be applied to another," but rather to "order, and make sense of, a complicated set of events at a particular point in the past." Another problem is the taken-for-granted teleology of progress.

Thinking about how historians' work offers some critical leverage on problematic types of historicism in the social sciences, social scientists sometimes tend to assume that the past is knowable, that historical contexts can be accessed and understood. The problem here is that we access the past through frames of interpretation, and these frames have their own histories. Over time, for example, the way we have understood Atlantic slavery has changed fundamentally. The same or similar facts take on new and different meanings, while new questions lead to new archives and new facts. To train as a contemporary university historian is to learn to think historiographically, to critically situate research in the context of the existing historiography of an historical object or set of objects. The assumptions, questions, silences, politics, and much else that have shaped history writing over time become evident. This does not mean that histories do not contain facts, only that they have certain facts, not others, and that they assign certain significances to those facts and not to others.

Historians are not alone in arguing that the facts of the past are constituted through the concerns of the present (Benjamin 1968: 253–264; Nietzsche 1997; Weber 1949). But their training and practice are perhaps unique in the contemporary academy in driving this point home. Even so, historians are as susceptible, in their own way, as positivists to notions of the accumulation of knowledge (Wilder 2012). Historians see shifts in prevailing interpretations, and in the facts they uncover and assign significance to, as salutary evidence of intellectual vitality. These shifts are also evidence of how social and political context and change impacts the academy and its research. Only certain questions and the facts they lead to are thinkable in any given context. The upshot is that both positivist and historicist social scientists underestimate the difficulty of knowing the past and collecting facts about it. For historians attuned to historiography, the past is not stable. It exists only relative to the questions we ask of it in the present. Historicism may not be historicist enough.

Historicism in the study of political and international thought

As one way of avoiding the pitfalls discussed in the previous section, this section explores the ways contextualist scholars of the history of political thought have understood historicism and argues that contextualism can be seen as a variant of interpretive social science, and thus as part of the theoretical armory of IPS. IR theory approaches, including paradigmatic ones, often appeal to canonical figures in the history of European political thought to establish their pedigree—Hobbes, Kant, Locke, Marx, and Mill, among others, are cited routinely as sources of authority and insight.

While canonical figures remain of great interest to historians of political thought, in recent decades, the canon itself has been challenged and expanded. Sometimes, this has involved recovering, reinterpreting, or redeploying canonical works of political theory. Sometimes, it has meant crafting a counter-canon of figures once marginalized, denigrated, or ignored, usually because of their gender or race (Getachew 2019; Owens and Rietzler 2020). Other scholars have engaged in reception histories, tracing how ideas have been appropriated, adapted, and redeployed in different spatial and temporal contexts (Vergerio 2019, 2022). This scholarship has also involved challenges to canonicity itself on the grounds that the criteria usually utilized to construct a canon (such as 'influence' or 'philosophical rigor') both miss politically consequential modes of thinking and can serve to reinforce patterns of exclusion and hierarchy (Blain 2018; Hutchings and Owens 2021; Keene 2017).

Work in the history of international thought has also assumed other forms. One important line of inquiry has investigated the disciplinary history of IR, exposing its imbrications with power and, in particular, its entanglements with practices of imperialism and the Cold War national security state. Scholarship of this kind tends to pay more attention to the role of institutions—university departments, think tanks, funding bodies, journals—than more traditional text-focused approaches (Oren 2002; Guilhot 2011; Bell 2018, 2021; Blatt 2018; Vitalis 2016; Thakur and Vale 2021; Parmar 2004, 2015). What they all have in common is the deployment of historical methods to make sense of past iterations of international thought, of how thinkers (of one kind or another) tried to make sense of their worlds.

Methodological debates over how best to conduct intellectual historical investigation are nothing new (McMahon and Moyn 2014; Whatmore 2016: part I). Different permutations of historicism have been adopted by those working on the history of international thought. Probably the most common type is a form of *linguistic contextualism* that seeks to locate arguments in discursive context (Skinner 2002; Brett 2002). Less well charted is the extent to which such debates are also interventions in the philosophy of social science. The case with Marxist or critical theoretic interpretive approaches is obvious: intellectual history is integrated into overarching explanatory schema. But it is worth pausing to draw out the wider implications of contextualism.

Some scholars have argued that while contextualism does not have an inherent political orientation, it can be put to use for the purposes of critique (on this, see Benton 2019; Orford 2021; Moyn 2022). Historicizing ideas, norms, and institutions—exposing how they emerged, what helped to sustain them, and what legitimating strategies have been employed to uphold them—both exposes their contingency and opens the door to imagining alternatives. By emphasizing the "contingency of prevailing conventions," Darshan Vigneswaran and Joel Quirk (2010: 109) argue, intellectual history demonstrates how "relatively recent structures and orientations" are elevated to the "status of enduring historical essences" (also see Devetak 2018). Doing so opens up new avenues for thinking, especially about ethics: "Anti-naturalism assumes that human beliefs are

situated against a background of traditions … Because ethical life is historical in this way, anti-naturalist political science research into the past can generate, inspire, and reveal new untapped sources for ethics and politics" (Bevir and Blakely 2018a: 434).

Contextualism should be read as part of the broad family of interpretivist approaches to social inquiry. Interpretivism assumes a variety of forms, with different strands drawing on (among other things) phenomenology, pragmatism, hermeneutics, and ordinary language philosophy (Bevir and Blakeley 2018b; Lynch 2014; Scott and Keats 2001). Interpretivist approaches are united by the claim that the social sciences should be concerned with the interpretation of meanings rather than the discovery of causal laws or ahistorical generalizations. As Dvora Yanow (2006: 9) puts it, interpretivists focus on humans as beings that "make, communicate, interpret, share, and contest meaning. We act; we have intentions about our actions; we interpret others' actions; we (attempt) to make sense of the world: we are meaning-making creatures." Interpretivist research reflects the plurality of its sources and intellectual affiliations. One strand emphasizes the importance of ethnographic methods, of researching social worlds through prolonged immersion in them (Schatz 2009; Wedeen 2010). Though such approaches acknowledge the vital importance of history in understanding the origins and development of practices, ethical systems, and institutions, the research is focused chiefly on the present.

Other interpretivist strands are more explicitly historical. This was part of Skinner's original research agenda (Adelman 2013: ch. 18; Skinner 1973; Tully 1988). For Mark Bevir, intellectual history is central to interpretivism because of the ineliminable role of intentionality in social action: "Properly to understand social life just is to refer to the intentionality of the relevant actors. Properly to explain intentionality just is to place it in the relevant historical context. Thus, all the human sciences necessarily depend on intellectual history" (Bevir 2011: 105). This is contextualist intellectual history conceived of principally as the study of broad 'traditions' of thought, traditions that frame human action and provide the resources for its reproduction and creative appropriation. This form of analysis, too, has been utilized in IR (e.g. Bevir, Daddow, and Hall 2013). A further historicizing move made in some historical-interpretive scholarship is to explore the performative dimensions of social scientific theorizing. The study of such performativity is necessarily historical—it requires unpacking the emergence, dissemination, and circulation of such frameworks. In this vein, Bevir has analyzed how new forms of governance have been informed and shaped by a range of social scientific theories, including new public management theory (Bevir and Rhodes 2003).

One of the central issues in interpretivism concerns the appropriate scope of analysis. Much interpretivist work, and especially that inspired by anthropological scholarship and methods, is skeptical of claims to generalizability and focuses attention on the local. It was this turn away from generalizability, in part, that provoked Peter Hall (2007: 131–133) to lament the loss of the synthetic ambitions of the mid-twentieth-century

human sciences, in which historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists, rather than pulling in different methodological directions as they emphasized either the material or cultural, could engage in a collective project seeking macro-historical explanatory schemes. But this skepticism is not universally shared. Wedeen (2010: 257), for example, argues that "interpretive social science does not have to foreswear generalizations or causal explanations." Bevir and Blakeley (2018a), too, suggest that it is a mistake to regard interpretivism as entailing the rejection of causal or explanatory arguments, though those terms are understood in a different way from that employed in positivist and neo-positivist scholarship. The scope of claims about modernity made by some of the leading interpretivist scholars—Charles Taylor, Alistair Macintyre, and James Scott spring to mind—lack none of the grand ambition of the boldest positivists (see also Simmons and Smith 2021).

Conclusion: 'Historicism' and IPS

To date, IPS has not been deeply engaged in debates around historicism in IR. That could be because IPS, until now, has been drawn mostly from a particular sociological well, which may well be classified as "radically historicist" per Hobson and Lawson (2008), as outlined in the first section of this chapter. But, in practice, much that has been labelled as IPS in IR has mirrored (or at least has not directly challenged) the ahistoricism of mainstream IR traditions. This is a missed opportunity for IPS because, as the sections above illustrate, historicism, and debates about historicism, are integral to social inquiry, including much that interests IPS scholars. As other chapters in this section also outline (Duzgun, Sabaratnam), IPS can and should take historicism and historicist approaches more seriously. In this chapter, by discussing how historicism has been defined in the 'historical turn' in IR, as well as in the broader social science field and within interpretivist approaches to the study of political thought, we have aimed to highlight the many ways in which IPS can work in this direction.

Notes

1. Steinmetz (2020) gives a detailed overview of the evolution of historicism, especially in the German and US contexts. See also the other chapters in Herman and Veldhuizen (2020).
2. Bell adopts this terminology for historian of science Peter Galison.

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CHAPTER 14

HISTORY AND THEORY

On Putting Imperialism Back in the Center of Things

JEANNE MOREFIELD

INTRODUCTION

On June 16, 2021, following his closely followed meeting with Vladimir Putin, an obviously tired but still winkingly ebullient Joe Biden stepped up to a podium outside the Hôtel du Parc des Eaux-Vives in Geneva to answer questions from the assembled media. At one point, a journalist from the Associated Pressed asked Biden to give him an example of something concrete that had been achieved during the talks that would prevent Russian cyber-attacks and electoral interference in the future. Biden responded by emphasizing the power of reputational damage as a deterrent. "Let's get this straight," he continued, switching into plain-talking mode (The White House 2021),

> How would it be if the United States were viewed by the rest of the world as interfering with the elections directly of other countries, and everybody knew it? What would it be like if we engaged in activities that he is engaged in? It diminishes the standing of a country that is desperately trying to make sure it maintains its standing as a major world power.

Leaving aside the near-audible howls of derisive laughter that echoed through the Twittersphere in the minutes and days that followed, what is most arresting about Biden's comments is the guilelessness of their utterance. A member (and eventually Chair) of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee since the 1970s, if anyone had privileged insight into the gory details of the United States' near constant tampering in the elections of other countries throughout the twentieth century, it was Joe Biden. And yet there he was, on stage in Geneva, in front of an international audience who knew better, blithely framing the question as a hypothetical.

Just over 100 years earlier in Paris, amid meetings designed to hash out the principles of a post-war League of Nations based in Geneva, US President Woodrow Wilson attempted to convince 17 state representatives that the League's founding document should refer explicitly to the Monroe Doctrine. The comments of several delegates present make it clear that they believed Wilson's inclusion of it in the Covenant to be both at odds with the spirit of international governance and a transparent attempt to secure US hegemony in the region.[1] Wilson's response: guilelessness. No, of

course that wasn't the case, he argued, the Monroe Doctrine set forth a liberal, internationalist vision of the world and the League of Nations was, itself, "the highest possible tribute to the Monroe Doctrine." Indeed, he continued, the League Covenant "adopted the Monroe Doctrine as a world doctrine" (League of Nations 1919). With everyone else in the room, Wilson was well aware that this major plank of US foreign policy did no such thing and that the "Roosevelt Corollary" to the Doctrine gave the United States the exclusive right to "exercise international police power" in the hemisphere, as it already had with the invasions and occupations of Santo Domingo (1904), Nicaragua (1911), and Haiti (1915) (Atkins 2014).[2] And yet, here he was, sitting at a table with people who knew better, insisting that the United States had no imperial ambitions in Latin America or elsewhere.

Separated by a century, these two examples of presidential guilelessness suggest that US power in the world has, for a very long time, relied upon a willful *unseeing* of US imperialism, an unseeing that is substantively different from accidental omission. In both examples, imperialism is the overdetermined elephant in the room, which everyone knows is there but refuses to bring into focus. This same insouciance is mirrored within the common sense of both the US foreign policy establishment and mainstream, liberal internationalist approaches to International Relations (IR) (Vitalis 2017). For the scholars and public intellectuals who populate these overlapping worlds, the United States is a "great power" that exercises "primacy." It is a "hegemon"—maybe even a "liberal hegemon"—but the outsized power it wields isn't imperial.

Imperialism, throughout the post-war period, has remained a great void, giving shape and meaning to US foreign policy discourse and the rhetoric of liberal internationalism. Maintaining this absence depends upon a baseline commitment to imagining a world where history doesn't matter, a world where hundreds of years of European imperialism have no impact on current power relations, and where the obvious interference of the US security state in the global politics of the world today can be overlooked or rationalized. Given the popular hold of this hegemonic approach on US foreign policy discourse, it is hardly surprising that, as Barkawi, Bell, and Zakarol note in their introductory chapter to this section, "ahistoricist approaches" have also "dominated mainstream IR for much of the last century."

A number of critical IR scholars, including Anthony Anghie, Geeta Chowdhury, Branwen Gruffydd Jones, Nivi Manchanda, Sheila Nair, Meera Sabaratnam, Sanjay Seth, and Robbie Shilliam, have sought to address this problem by reading the history of racism and imperialism back into the origins of international law, theories of development, approaches to intervention, international knowledge production, international organization, conceptions of sovereignty, and more.[3] These scholars tend, however, to be less interested in the way imperial unseeing continues to circulate through the discursive universe of contemporary liberal internationalism as expressed by both academics and "intellectual middlemen"—as Vitalis calls them—skilled at

getting their ideas across "to non-academic audiences in Washington, New York, and beyond" (Vitalis 2017: 4).[4] Conversely, because of the way the discipline is internally structured into discrete sub-fields, those people currently doing the most extensive work on the entanglements of liberalism and imperialism in the discipline of political science tend to avoid analyzing contemporary foreign policy and, instead, focus their critical and genealogical efforts on the work of historical liberals. Thus, political theorists like Karuna Mantena, Uday Mehta, and Jennifer Pitts all write beautifully about the revealing tensions that sit at the intersection of liberalism and empire in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, but they rarely draw upon these insights to reflect on similar tensions haunting liberal internationalism today (Mehta 1999; Pitts 2005; Mantena 2010).

My modest intervention in this chapter is to bridge the worlds of critical IR and historical political theory in order to gain a better understanding of imperialism's robust absence from the liberal internationalist imaginary today. I do this by first examining some of the reasons for that absence in both liberal internationalists and political theory discourse since the end of the Second World War, focusing on the particular obsession in IR with the questions of "thingness" or essence (e.g. "Is America an empire?"). I then argue for an approach that plucks imperialism out of the void of unseeing, where liberals have placed it for much of the discipline's existence, and deposit it back into the center of our analysis. I take my inspiration for this approach from Edward Said, who argued for a mode of criticism that, as he puts it, takes "what has been left out" of the current discourse and places these missing actualities "back in the center of things," while also interrogating the rhetorical universe that makes it possible to unsee them in the first place (Said 2004: 142–143).

While, over the past 15 years, some IR scholars have turned to Said's work for critical inspiration and insight, their generative readings of his approach to theory, counterpoint, humanism, and the role of public intellectuals have also tended to avoid close analyses of the way liberal internationalist rhetoric reflects liberalism's historical and contemporary entanglements with imperialism.[5] But Said's approach to imperialism, I argue, gives us a particularly productive way of interrogating these entanglements in the past and in the present. In particular, Said's approach does this by combining the urgent need to make an inventory of historical imperialism with a powerful language for thinking about the deflective power of liberal imperialist rhetoric. Purely contextual excavations of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) election tampering, for instance, or detailed genealogies of the historical misuses of the Munroe Doctrine can't, on their own, adequately capture the hegemonic grasp of imperial guilelessness on liberal internationalism. As Said once noted in reference to the politics of Israel–Palestine, "facts" do not "speak for themselves but require a socially acceptable narrative to absorb, sustain, and circulate them" (Said 1995: 254). This intellectual orientation reintegrates "facts" back into contemporary rhetorical accounts

of politics by linking forgotten or suppressed histories with critical analyses of the discursive universe that renders these histories illegible (Said 1979a: 56). It thus treats imperialism as *both* a contextually specific *and* a rhetorically and ideologically broad phenomenon: as a multifaceted system of power.

In the final part of the chapter, I turn to historical inquiries of the relationship between imperialism and liberalism to illustrate how a Said-inspired approach allows us to better interrogate the discursive universe of liberal internationalism by navigating between approaches that tend to treat liberalism as either inherently imperial or as only situationally imperial. Rather, I argue for a Said-inspired interpretive practice that approaches liberalism and imperialism through their connection rather than their supposed contradictions.

"What has been left out"

Understanding the absence of imperialism in liberal internationalism and mainstream IR discourse more generally requires a return to the period of "sustained reflection about the organization of international knowledge" that followed the Second World War (Guilhot 2017: 28). In North America, this period of reflection took place in the context of disciplinary consolidation and professionalization, as political science began to define itself internally through discrete sub-disciplines concerned with "domestic," "comparative," "international," and "theoretical" arenas of analysis.[6] The major distinction between IR and the other sub-disciplines was the sovereign state itself, with the majority of IR scholars turning their interests toward, in Martin Wight's words, the "untidy fringe" *between* states (Wight 1960: 35). Thus, as IR scholars were busy fashioning what Hans Morgenthau insisted was "the proper place of international relations and area studies as academic disciplines" relative to political science, they were clearly imagining relations between states—"powers" great and small—as their primary units of analysis (Guilhot 2017: 28).[7]

Today, IR's mainstream traditions continue to privilege the state in their interpretive frames, and many scholars continue to *retroactively* read the landscape of world history through these same lenses.[8] This means that, as a transnational mode of power, imperialism tends to fall outside of their conceptual modes of interpretation despite the fact that most of the world's population, as David Armitage puts it, "for most of history lived not in nation states but in empires," and imperial politics remained centrally important to US and European foreign policy discussion until the third quarter of the twentieth century (Armitage 2014: 239).[9] Moreover, Armitage continues, the European and US intellectuals most involved in the debates about global politics following the Second World War were not just thinking about the relationship between states. They

were also profoundly worried about the "drawn-out transition from a world of empires to a world of states" (Armitage 2013).[10]

Vitalis describes this as a discipline-wide "norm against noticing" the explicitly imperialist/racist preoccupations of the early discipline and the work of mid-twentieth-century Black American scholars like Merze Tate, who actually *were* writing about imperialism and race (Vitalis 2017: 13). The "norm against noticing" also contributes to a baseline consensus that the global power of the United States is not imperial, a foundational assumption resembling what Jodi Byrd calls "colonial agnosia." For Byrd, US settler politics are largely framed by an inability "to connect the present tense presence," of Indigenous politics in North America today with "the larger systems of domination that continue to inform Otherness within U.S. settler imperialism."[11] In the context of IR and US foreign policy, "colonial agnosia" filters global and domestic politics—past and present—through a mode of mis-perception that allows the field of IR to proceed *as if* imperialism was a purely European phenomenon, *as if* that phenomenon were relegated entirely to history, and *as if* (until Michael Doyle wrote *Empires* in 1986) the field showed little interest in imperialism—because international politics is not about empires.[12]

The "norm against noticing" in mainstream IR means that scholars eschew analyzing not only the impact of historical imperialism, colonialism, slavery, resource extraction, and dispossession on contemporary global politics but also the living effects of the United States' "informal imperialism" on the post-colonial world, from CIA-sponsored coups to structural readjustment programs, to the increasingly sanitized practice of "humane warfare" (Kinser 2006; Bachevich 2020; Moyn 2021). Colonial agnosia means that most political scientists are not just hesitant to utter the word "empire" aloud, it simply wouldn't occur to most of them to do so. Within IR, liberals, realists, and constructivists alike choose terms of art like "hegemon" and "great power" to describe the political, military, and economic "primacy" of the United States, and those few mainstream IR scholars who *do* think about imperialism treat it as a (primarily historical) species of *state* power.[13] In *Empires*, for example, Doyle defines an empire as the "relationship, formal or informal, in which one *state* controls the effective political sovereignty of another" and imperialism as "simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire [emphasis added]" (Doyle 1986: 45).

When combined, an aversion to the word "empire," an inability to imagine that the United States might *be* an empire, and a discipline-wide emphasis on states and state power, all add up to an overall fixation with definitions, or what Paul Kramer calls "thingness" (Kramer 2011: 1350). This phenomenon dates back to the early days of the discipline and can be seen, for instance, in Morgenthau's approach to state power in *Politics among Nations* (2005). Thus, literally in the midst of a discussion about the United States' acquisition of the Virgin Islands—and less than a decade after it left Haiti following a 20-year occupation—Morgenthau looked around him at world events and

decided to call the United States a "status quo," rather than an imperial power (Morgenthau 2005: 24). There is no explanation for this decision that is not tautological: the United States was a "status quo" power for Morgenthau because the United States was not an empire.

This attachment to "thingness"—that is, an attachment to the idea that empires always resemble a particular object—means that, while mainstream US political scientists have, over the post-war era, occasionally used the words "imperialism" or "empire," they almost always do so in reference to the ambitions of other states *or* in the context of asking a single hypothetical question: *is* the United States an empire? And if so, Kramer argues, "what type is it" and how does it compare "to the rubrics built to account for other empires" (Kramer 2011: 1350)? The answer is usually, "No." The United States isn't an empire because it doesn't look like other empires. Shutting down this avenue of inquiry then tends to mute questions about *how* the United States came to be a hegemon in the first place. When mainstream IR scholars think about this, they tend to offer a variety of not terribly robust explanations. Realists John Mearsheimer and Steven Walt, for instance, believe that the United States is simply "the luckiest great power in history" (Mearsheimer and Walt 2016: 72). Liberal internationalists like John Ikenberry, by contrast, believe that other states voluntarily handed over their power to the United States following the Second World War because they knew it was in their best interests, "just as Hobbes' individuals in the state of nature construct and hand over power to the Leviathan" (Ikenberry 2012: 10). Thus, luck and an ahistorical fairy tale stand in for where historical analysis of imperial history should be.

"Thingness" not only precludes discussions of origins but also obscures analyses of *action*. In other words, persevering on the "*Is* the United States an empire?" question forecloses the "When is the United States *acting* imperially?" question. Because that question rarely gets asked, liberal internationalist supporters of the "American led liberal world order," such as Daniel Deudney and John Ikenberry are able to push for a US "grand strategy" that looks, to all intents and purposes, like imperialism, while insisting that the United States is not an empire (Deudney and Ikenberry 2012). Worse, some IR critics of US hegemony, who are profoundly frustrated by the state's military overreach and advocate for a more restrained foreign policy, are hamstrung by the limitations of their disciplinary language when it comes to explaining the actions of the United States in the world.[14] Richard Ned Lebow and Simon Reich, for instance, make a powerful critique of US militarism in *Goodbye Hegemony* (2014) but, in refusing to name that militarism "imperial," both limit the impact of their criticism and open the door for supporters of US power to insist on its necessity. In other words, refusing to name US power "imperial" simultaneously throws up distinctions between their criticisms and the rich, ongoing tradition of anti-colonial criticisms, while simultaneously reinforcing the exceptionalist narrative that allows supporters of the "American led liberal world order" to insist that US power isn't imperial. Even when it is.

Finally, intellectual divisions between the sub-field within political science that emerged following the Second World War have resulted in a scholarly landscape (most notably in North America) where the divisions between IR and political theory are rigidly enforced. Indeed, when Wight made his comments about the "untidy fringe" of IR inquiry in 1960, he did so in the context of arguing that the distinction between political theory and IR is so obvious, it "requires no explanation" (Wight 1960: 35). IR scholars, Wight argued, studied global power politics, while political theorists pondered normative questions about the good life *within* states. Even when Rawlsian-inspired theorists like Charles Beitz and Henry Shue began arguing, in the 1970s, that theories of justice might usefully be applied beyond the nation-state, they did so in an idiom that preserved the distinction between "untidy" power politics and pristine "domestic" philosophical inquiry.[15] It remains anathema to most mainstream IR scholars that critical arguments about race, power, history, discipline, or structures of oppression developed by political theorists might have anything useful to add to discussions of global politics. At the same time, political theorists today still largely avoid contemporary questions about the relationship between liberalism, US imperialism, and foreign policy, even when they are actively engaged in novel and innovative readings of historical anti-colonial thought.[16]

Each of these enclosures—around IR, around political theory, around the state, around the United States—has contributed to a situation where political theory and IR occupy what Duncan Bell describes as "parallel universes," with markedly different literatures and understandings of the very same terms (e.g. "liberalism," "idealism," and "realism") (Bell 2017: 12). At the same time, these same enclosures have historically made it difficult for both political theorists and IR scholars to recognize and analyze imperialism and, in particular, to make connections between imperialism in the past and global politics today. Said's mode of criticism cuts through the layers of unseeing that flow from these enclosures by situating analysis in the connections between past and present, history and theory, power and culture, that is in the connections generated through imperialism itself.

"Back in the center of things"

Since the publication of *Orientalism* in 1978, scholars across the humanities and social sciences have been drawn to Said's work. A profoundly influential text, *Orientalism* inaugurated the field of post-colonial studies, transformed the study of imperialism in the academy, and shifted the intellectual horizon of the humanities. In that book, and other essential texts, such as *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), Said approached imperialism as a dynamic process that orders the world temporally and spatially through common-sense notions of the "Other" and cartographic visions of the world he famously called "imaginative geography" (Said 1978: 49). Said interrogated

imperialism as power knowledge, drilling into the "knowing vocabulary" and "comparative framework" that reduces the complexities and multiplicities of the Middle East, Near East, and Asia "to a kind of human flatness" analyzable through a known typology of difference and essence (Said 1978: 250). Both an early adopter and critic of Foucault, Said relied heavily on Foucault's approach to power knowledge while simultaneously taking him to task for what he described as Foucault's failure to "account seriously" for political change (Said 1971: 60).[17] In particular, Said was deeply critical of Foucault's lack of interest in the historical reality of resistance, ultimately concluding that Foucault too often served as a "scribe of domination" and a sometimes co-conspirator with the status quo (Said 1983: 215).[18]

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Said argued, amateur and professional Orientalists worked to refine the list of features they associated with the East: "its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness." They then contrasted these feature with those of the "West": its rationality, tendency toward democracy, self-control, and drive to make history (Said 1978: 205). His antidote to this fixing and flattening is a two-pronged style of investigation that probes those tension-filled, human-created moments he termed history's "disruptive detail" and combines this with an analysis of Orientalist discourse in action (Said 1978: 240). The specific subjects of Said's inquiry range from well-known political and artistic figures (e.g. Ernest Renan, Gustave Flaubert, Arthur Balfour, and Lord Cromer) to obscure polemicists and travel writers, and the text under inquiry similarly runs the gamut from philosophical observations, to journals, to novels, to guide books.

The most striking feature of *Orientalism* is Said's departure from mainstream literary theories of the time which, in his words, "isolated textuality from circumstances" (Said 1983: 3). With Raymond Williams, Said argued that texts are "produced and live on in the historical realm" (Said 2003). Analyzing the emergence and circulation of Orientalist texts thus requires first bringing them into conversation with power and context (an approach he referred to as "worldly") and then situating them within the military, political, cultural, and material apparatuses that supported the West's rapidly expanding imperial influence in the East. For Said, "Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West" whose main purpose was to elide "difference" with "weakness" (Said 1978: 204). Excising this material from the work of those thinkers and writers "who contributed so much to the making of a national and cultural identity" in the West is, he argued, a form of "historical amputation" (Said 2000: 419). Thus for Said, imperialism and Orientalism are not simply historical phenomena: they are "constantly expanding," "inexorably integrative" ideological formations that buttressed domination in the past, rationalize imperial politics in the present, and render invisible the impact of the former on the latter (Said 1994: 6, 8).

Unlike Doyle, Said's interpretive impulse to treat imperialism as a dimension of power meant that he never approached it as "simply the process" by which one state establishes and maintains "effective political sovereignty" over another. Rather, for Said, as a dimension of power, imperialism unfolds on a variety of levels, which far exceed one state's physical occupation of another state's sovereign territory. As he explains in "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims," it would be a "serious underestimation" of imperialism if one were to "consider territory in too literal a way" (Said 1979b: 25). Instead, he continues:

> Gaining and holding an imperium means gaining and holding a domain, which includes a variety of operations, among them constituting an area, accumulating its inhabitants, having power over its ideas, people, and of course, its land, converting people, land, and ideas to the purposes and uses of a hegemonic imperial design.

Thus, for Said, "laying claim to an *idea* and laying claim to a *territory*" are both crucial parts of the same "constitutive activity."

On the whole, the "constitutive activity" of imperialism promotes disparities between the colonizers and the colonized, fosters status differentials among the colonized, creates and affirms hierarchies, and spins affirmative narratives about "*our* culture"—the culture of the exceptional metropole (Said 1989: 215).[19] In order to support and expand this scalar world, imperialism must function on a number of different philosophical, political, cultural, military, artistic, architectural, economic, and geographical registers simultaneously. Moreover, any definition of imperialism that ends at the level of "state control" necessarily fails to account for today's world in which the institutions and terminologies of international political and economic organization continue to be structured, in an ongoing way, by the historical development of imperialism (Tully 2009a: 5).

A key element of Said's critical orientation toward politics and culture is his persistent centering of imperialism rather than "thingness" (empire). In other words, throughout the corpus of his scholarship, Said takes the internally fluctuating structure of discursive power—what Michael Freeden might call a "semantic field" and James Tully a "contested field"—which has sustained imperialism since the eighteenth-century, as his primary object of analysis (Freeden 2005: 20; Tully 2009b: 244). This imperial system expresses itself through policy, through violence, through culture, through media, through text, and through the writings and public utterances of a variety of intellectual types who are often connected to each other through a dense web of affiliations that make sense out of the extant and ongoing domination of others. Imperialism, in this Said-inspired sense, overflows its definitional floodgates and fills up post-colonial space, refusing to be contained by the question that routinely silences inquiry in our discipline: "*Is* America an empire?"

As a scalar vision of the world, imperialism changes over time and expresses itself differently in changing imperial contexts: from the self-confident crowing of nineteenth-century imperial administrators, to the British Round Table Society's softened vision of

imperial Commonwealth just before the First World War, to George H.W. Bush's late-twentieth-century proclamations of a "New World Order."[20] There are, however, discursive features of modern imperialism (e.g. Orientalist framings of the "Other," narratives of civilization, mechanisms of occlusion, strategies of deflection) that consistently re-assert themselves in different historical epochs and whose visibility make it possible to trace commonalities, as Said puts it, in "the rhetoric of Cromer, Balfour, Kissinger, and other statesmen" (Said 1976: 47). By its sprawling nature, imperialism is thus always both/and. It is *both* historically and contextually specific *and* there are similarities that scholars can identify in its rhetorical and material expressions that emerge and re-emerge through the narratives of public intellectuals—popular and scholarly—over time.

Said's scholarship was thus always situated at the intersection of historical inquiry, critical analysis, and contemporary political criticism. For instance, he conceived of *Orientalism* as part of a trilogy of texts meant to elucidate the relationship between historical imperialism and the contemporary situation in Israel–Palestine. As he conceived it, part one (*Orientalism*) explored the relationship between power, knowledge, and European imperialism. Part two (*The Question of Palestine*, 1979a), extended this analysis of imperialism beyond "a summary of recent history" toward an exploration of "the Palestinian interpretation of Palestinian experience," thus demonstrating the "relevance of both to the contemporary political scene" (Said 1979a: xviii). Part three (*Covering Islam*, 1981) interrogated the Orientalist lens through which much of the Western media views Islam.[21]

In sum, whether Said referred to it as "worldly," "humanist," "philological," or "contrapuntal"—and over the course of his career, he used all these terms—he situated his approach in the back and forth between the history of imperialism and contemporary politics, combining detailed historical inquiries with interrogations of contemporary discourses, paying particular attention to the way these discourses excised history and muted alternative voices. This entails drilling not only into what is being said but also "between the space of words" (Said 2003: 85). It is in this space, Said demonstrates, that we begin to understand imperialism not merely as a unidirectional mode of domination but as an overlapping universe of connections: between cultures, between ideas, between political systems, and between the past and the present.

In what follows, I explore how this approach to centering connections—that is, to focusing on "what has been left out" and how—can provide scholars interested in the historical relationship between liberalism and imperialism with a particularly fruitful set of lenses for negotiating the tension between contextualism and pattern seeking, between an approach that takes historicism seriously and an approach that refuses to give upon the possibility that scholars can speak beyond the particular.

Imperialism and liberalism

Within the history of political thought, scholarship that explores the conceptual and material intersection between liberalism (as both a political philosophy and ideology) and imperialism is most frequently associated with what is sometimes called the "turn to empire" that took place in the early 2000s. It is, of course, hardly surprising that this turn emerged during the moment of global reckoning that followed the events of September 11, 2001 and the invention of the "war on terror," the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, and the 2003 Iraq War. During this period, scholars of the history of political thought began to grow increasingly skeptical of Francis Fukuyama's claim that "the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" was now upon us (Fukuyama 1989: 4). They also became increasingly dissatisfied with the general silence within the field regarding the historical relationship between canonical political figures and the emergence and solidification of European imperialism. As Jennifer Pitts notes, the "combination of overwhelming and unaccountable power" exercised by the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq cast into stark relief the disconnect between expressions of liberal democracy and state domination, both historical and contemporary (Pitts 2010: 220).

Engagements with this apparent disconnect between liberalism and imperialism in history have tended to take two predominant forms within the history of political thought. First, scholars like Uday Mehta began interrogating the complicity of canonical liberal figures in the politics of empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and asking probing questions about both their theorizing and the limitations and possibilities of liberalism in general. In *Liberalism and Empire* (1999), Mehta probed the tension between "self-consciously" universal theories expressed by the likes of Mill, and Mill's full-throated support for the imposition of "undemocratic and non-representative structures" on people he considered civilizationally stunted (Mehta 1999: 1–2).[22] His analysis of the work of Locke and Mill concentrated on the various "strategies of exclusion" that played a major role in their liberal imaginations, strategies that ultimately manifest themselves in the internal "urge to dominate the world" (Mehta 1999: 20).

Second, contextualist scholars devoted themselves to telling the story of a more complex history of liberalism focused less on canonical thinkers than on the shifting terrain of liberal arguments, practices, narratives, and claims evoked by various figures "in the context of their time" (Rosenblatt 2018: 5). Duncan Bell, for instance, approaches liberalism as an "actor's category" embraced by a variety of "thinkers, ideas, and movements that were regarded as liberal" in their day (Bell 2015: 5). This approach has led Bell to focus on lesser-known, pro-imperial thinkers who happened to identify as liberals. He argues that it is through engagement with this diverse universe of public intellectuals—this "motley cast of characters"—that we gain essential insight into the deeply capacious and frequently unstable character of liberalism as a political ideology concerned, at different historical moments, with ruling and ordering the world

(Bell 2015: 364).[23] The point is to avoid "sweeping generalisations" that "typically mislead more than they inform" (Bell 2023). Instead, thinkers like Bell explore how liberalisms circulate in their historical contexts as culturally and rhetorically diffuse and distinct, discursive phenomena evoked by various historical actors in support of, or against, empire.

While both of these approaches provide us with tremendous insight into the ways that liberalism/s function in the context of imperialism, they are also hamstrung by certain limitations associated with the privileging of liberalism *over* imperialism as an object of analysis. This privileging manifests in two conceptual limitations, one having to do with inherency, the other with hyper-contextualism.

Mehta's work gives us a sense of some of the problems associated with inherency. Thus, he argues that the point of his book is to interrogate liberalism "through the mirror that reflects its association with the British Empire" (Mehta 1999: 1). He thus enters into his analysis wondering if there are "reasons internal to liberalism" that compel its advocates toward imperialism and concludes that there are "strategies of exclusion," which play a vital role in the liberal imagination, manifesting in an "urge to dominate the world" (Mehta 1999: 8, 20). The first problem with this framing is that if we agree with Mehta that liberalism is inherently imperial, how do we explain those myriad historical examples of times when its self-described adherents were decidedly not? How, for instance, do we explain what Andrew Fitzmaurice describes as the "depth of liberal opposition to empire" throughout the nineteenth century (Fitzmaurice 2012: 122)? Mehta's work doesn't provide us with answers to these questions.

The second problem with inherency is more explicitly political in that it reinforces the central, ideological message championed by supporters of the "American led, liberal world order." In other words, "liberalism" today is not just the dominant political philosophy of our age; it is also the hegemonic *lingua franca* of much contemporary public discourse *in* the United States *about* the United States *in* the world. From John Ikenberry to Michael Ignatieff, Samuel Huntington to Daniel Deudney, Niall Ferguson to Anne-Marie Slaughter, some of the most powerful public intellectuals of our age understand their societies *to be* liberal and democratic in their essence. They have thus tended to respond to the question as Mehta frames it—"Is liberalism imperialist?"—from a position of extreme defensiveness grounded in the assumption that the "liberal world order" must be defended against its critics (Ikenberry 2017: 2). This means their historical inquiries lean heavily into "thingness." In *A World Safe for Democracy* (Ikenberry 2020), for instance, he engages a selection of historical works on the convergence between liberalism and imperialism and admits that, yes, liberal internationalism was "brought into the 20th century on the back of European empire" and that it has "dirty hands" (2020: 215). And yet, despite this acknowledgment, he concludes that this history simply doesn't (and can't) outweigh the good liberalism *has* done and *can* do. Thus, even though liberal internationalism, according to Ikenberry, has been "implicated in almost constant military interventions during the era of American

global dominance," these interventions are the exceptions that prove the rule because the United States is liberal, and liberalism is not imperial. Every single occupation for Ikenberry, every instance of over-reach, every moment of violence, every ill-conceived intervention, only reconfirms that faith (Ikenberry 2020: 253). Like a salmon retracing the flow of its natal river, Ikenberry relentlessly returns to questions of inherency. "Are liberal states inherently revisionist?," he asks; "Is liberalism inherently expansionist and self-destructive?" "Is the American liberal tradition inherently interventionist?" (Ikenberry 2020: 21, 216, 247) Ikenberry's response is to look at the history of US global domination and declare that it is not: because the United States is liberal, and liberalism is not imperialist.

Contextualist approaches, on the other hand, present a different set of problems that stem from the move to *over*-de-essentialize liberalism by treating it solely as an "actor's category" with very specific local and temporal characteristics. While approaches like Bell's avoid the overdetermined quality of treating liberalism as a coherent bundle of ideas consistent throughout the ages, they also present challenges for political theorists interested in pairing historical sensibilities with the urgent demands of the present. In other words, contextualist approaches make it difficult (or even impossible) to make any consistent observations about liberalism's entanglements with imperialism historically and then to identify similarities in liberal strategies over time in ways that might deepen our understanding of the present. As Bell himself might put it (with Barkawi and Zakarol), what is the relationship between the historical specificity of liberalism and general patterns or common structures we find within liberalism? Is liberalism always different in different times and places? In what ways can it be said to operate in a similar way across time?

A Said-inspired analysis provides a powerful way of addressing the inherency-versus-contextualism problem by shifting the center of analysis away from liberalism to imperialism; specifically, to an understanding of imperialism *as the site* of cultural, political, and discursive connections that are always both historically specific and ideologically broad. It thus solves the inherency problem by wresting our historical gaze away from thingness—*is* liberalism necessarily imperial? *Is* America an empire?—toward the actual historical and contemporary *connections* between liberalism and imperialism. For Said, these worldly entanglements are the stuff of inquiry rather than philosophical and ethical puzzles to be solved in the process of deciding whether liberalism has an "urge" to empire. The questions become not *how* has liberalism, writ large, been compromised or enhanced by imperialism and *how* have liberal intellectuals negotiated this intersection? Rather, an approach that takes imperialism as its point of entry asks: what can we learn about the complicated apparatus of imperialism from its historical entanglements with liberalism? What do liberal intellectuals—from Mill to Ikenberry—get out of this relationship? What alternative approaches to politics and culture—both domestic and global—are silenced by the frantic back and forth between

liberalism and imperialism? What historical narratives have been lost, and what might we want to re-engage?

On the other hand, Said's both/and orientation to historical inquiry speaks to the problem of hyper-contextualism by treating "liberalism in the context of imperialism" as a complicated, internally diverse, and discordant amalgamation of ideas, thinkers, and institutional connections that re-emerge, fairly consistently, throughout the *longue durée* of modern imperialism. Thus, for Said, imperial ideology works on two levels simultaneously: at the level of individual expression, unique to particular thinkers, and at the level of expansive—narratively sprawling—imaginary geographies that naturalize and sustain European and US cultural, political, economic, and military imperialism over time. While it is too simplistic and reductive, he maintains in *Culture and Imperialism*, to argue "that everything in Europe or American culture … prepares for or consolidates the grand idea of empire," it is also "historically inaccurate to ignore these tendencies—whether in narrative, political theory, or pictorial technique—that enabled, encouraged, and otherwise assured the West's readiness to assume and enjoy the experience of empire" (Said 1994: 80).

This readiness has remained consistent over the centuries *even as* particular modes of imperializing have changed from formal to informal, colonial to neo-colonial, European to American. As Said puts it, each "great metropolitan center that aspired to global dominance has said, and alas done, many of the same things" (Said 1994: xxiii). One can thus identify rhetorical themes, narratives, and rationalizations about both the West and its "Other" that persist over the centuries, even when these take on distinct characteristics, such as the "family of ideas" associated with Orientalism—"Oriental despotism, Oriental splendor, cruelty, sensuality" (Said 1978: 4, 42). In its various expressions, Said argues—Austin to Cromer, Conrad to Kissinger, Bush to Lewis—Orientalist rhetoric has been "directly projected onto a colonial administration" and, in turn, "converted directly into a system of rules, exclusions, prohibitions placed upon Orientals in the Orient" (Said 2003). Said's approach to imperialism thus identifies distinct resemblances between the contemporary language of foreign policy and the "family of ideas" he associates with imperialism, without equating, for instance, nineteenth-century Orientalism with Huntington's "clash-of-civilizations" rhetoric.

One can bring a similar sensibility to the study of liberalism and imperialism. A fruitful comparison can be drawn, for instance, between scholarly ideas and the popular rhetoric of self-described liberals who supported the British Empire in the first part of the twentieth century and liberal supporters of US hegemony today. For instance, British public intellectuals associated with the pro-imperial, inter-war think tank, the Round Table, were as apprehensive and defensive about the liberal qualifications of their Empire as Ikenberry and Deudney are about theirs. And they expressed this apprehension and defensiveness through similar language meant to mute and diminish the violent, expansive, and acquisitive histories of Britain and the United States.

Thus, following the election of Donald Trump, Ikenberry and Deudney frequently responded to his lukewarm support for the liberal world order by extolling the virtues of that order and the virtues of liberalism more generally. In the midst of one particularly insistent, 2018 article on the topic, they paused briefly to reflect on the flaws of liberalism, but in a very particular way that resonates with the history of liberal imperial deflection. "Overall," Ikenberry and Deudney (2018: 18) argue,

> liberalism remains perennially and universally appealing because it rests on a commitment to the dignity and freedom of individuals … Although the ideology emerged in the West, its values have become universal, and its champions have extended to encompass Mahatma Gandhi, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Nelson Mandela. And even though imperialism, slavery, and racism have marred Western history, liberalism has always been at the forefront of efforts—both peaceful and militant—to reform and end these practices. To the extent that the long arc of history does bend toward justice, it does so thanks to the activism and moral commitment of liberals and their allies.

Here, Ikenberry's and Deudney's rhetorical move of first acknowledging the complicity of liberalism with practices of domination and then instantly claiming that what matters most is liberalism's ties to justice and the "long arc of history" seems clearly intended to perform acknowledgment while reinforcing liberalism's "overall" character—and by extension, the character of the United States as the world's liberal hegemon.

But the long arc of imperial history bends backwards in ways far more revealing than Ikenberry's and Deudney's ebullient gestures would suggest. For example, in 1915, liberal imperialist Lionel Curtis (in consultation with other Round Table members) published *The Commonwealth of Nations*, a text meant to spell out, in the most glowing terms, the trans-historical, liberal impulses of the British Empire. The sprawling narrative that Curtis spun thus located the origins of the British Empire in the liberal ideas of the Athenian *polis* and characterized its historical development as the gradual expansion of English freedom to ever more distant corners of the globe. In the course of spinning his account of liberal progress, Curtis paused for precisely one paragraph to acknowledge the participation of Britain in the Atlantic slave trade. Rather than dwell for any length of time on Britain's centuries-long, economic dependence upon slave labor and its pre-eminence as a slave-trading nation throughout the eighteenth century, Curtis acknowledged that slavery had been a terrible thing and then quickly shifted gear. "The question of real importance," he stressed, "is how far" the various states of Europe "were able to purge themselves of the poison and rise to a higher realization of their duty toward races that they were called by the claims of their own superior civilizations to protect" (Curtis 1916: 166).[24] Britain, he assured his readers, was quicker than all other European states to do just this.

Hence, a century apart, liberals turned to what Said might call the "family of ideas" associated with the rhetoric of liberal imperialism to ensure that the critical gaze never lingers for too long on the historical relationship between liberal ideology and "imperialism, slavery, and racism" but, rather, on the question "of real importance": the

liberal imperial society's "overall" commitment to justice and freedom (Moorefield 2014: 7).

In both periods, British and American liberals also leaned heavily on a rhetorical strategy of projection to fortify the liberal credentials of their imperial societies. They did (and continue to do) this by characterizing other peoples—even currently colonized peoples—as inherently "imperialist," while reframing the imperial power of their own states as liberal and democratic. For instance, when the influential liberal defender of British imperialism and future leader of South Africa, Jan Smuts, talked about the Empire in 1918, he did so through comparisons. "Germany is an Empire," he wrote in a document that would provide the institutional rationale for the League of Nations Mandate system. "Rome was an Empire. India is an Empire. But we [the British Empire] are a system of nations" (Smuts 1917: 26). The term "empire," for Smuts, was an essence, a baked-in characteristic of a people prone to expansionism and domination. Britain, by contrast, was essentially liberal.

In our era, liberal supporters of the United States' global power will similarly project imperial intentions onto other states while simply assuming the liberal intentions of the United States' hegemonic power. For instance, in one of her increasingly impatient articles written after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Anne Applebaum insists that Putin does not need "an off ramp" from the situation: "he needs to lose." "And only when he loses," she continues, "only when he is humiliated" will "Russia's wars of imperial conquest come to an end" (Appelbaum 2022). Obvious historical parallels aside, Applebaum's essays on this topic are notable for the fact that they only ever refer to the United States as a "custodian" of the liberal world order, which is, along with European "liberal societies," simply liberal by default. By assumption. We get no inkling, ever, of the United States' global military power and periodic aggression. We get no inkling of its 800 military bases in over 80 countries around the world (The Nation 2018). Indeed, the United States has more military personnel stationed in more locations around the world than any other people, nation, or empire in history. And yet, for Applebaum, only Russia is imperialist.

In sum, while historically and discursively distinctive, the imaginative languages of liberalism in these imperial contexts tends to smooth over the reality of racial hierarchy, dispossession, extraction, global inequality, and state-sanctioned violence through rhetorical strategies of deflection and projection that resonate across time. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, liberal internationalists have worked, in Said's works, to "make invisible and even 'impossible' " the "actual *affiliations*" between what imperial states do and who they say they *are* (Said 2000: 119). Liberalism, in this global iteration, helps sustain the hole where imperialism should be while, at the same time, endlessly rationalizing the global supremacy of US power.

Conclusion

At the end of the day, the benefits to the state of imperial unseeing are obvious: the United States continues to act imperially but continues to describe itself as a liberal democracy. The benefits to parts of IR as a discipline are slightly less obvious but not opaque. For liberal internationalists, if the United States is not an empire, it can be properly understood as the "first citizen" of a liberal world order based on "trade, alliances, international law, multilateralism, environmental protection, torture, and human rights" (Ikenberry 2017: 1). If the United States is not an empire, then the world is a conceptual terrain upon which "liberal democracies" compete with imperial states for the future of humanity. For liberal internationalists, this framing provides a coherent and simplified understanding of international politics into which types of states (imperial or democratic, illiberal or liberal) can be fitted, like cogs in an astrolabe, to paint a whole picture of the universe in which the connections between liberalism and imperialism simply disappear.

Said, by contrast, always insisted that his work was "not a theoretical machine" (Said 1978: 339). Rather, a Said-inspired approach that places imperialism "back in the center of things" makes the political and methodological affiliations between liberalism and imperialism visible. Hence, it provides one response to the questions Bell, Barkawi, and Zarakol pose about the relationship between historical inquiry and theoretical diagnosis. At the same time, it presses scholars to think more about the political significance of imperialism's absence; about the ways collective forms of willed ahistoricism have contributed to the maintenance of US military hegemony. In sum, making imperialism visible, and making it the key to our analysis, not only helps scholars navigate the contextual and theoretical questions raised by historical inquiry but also presses us all to think more about how our inquiry might challenge the perennial problem of guilelessness.

Notes

1. In addition, some historians have argued that Wilson's goals were bigger, that he wanted to establish America's credentials as the global superpower it would eventually become following the Second World War. See Smith (2005).
2. For more on the "Roosevelt Corollary," see Mitchener and Weidenmier (2005).
3. See also Chowdhury and Nair (2002); Anghie (2005); Gruffydd Jones (2006); Seth (2007); Shilliam (2015); Sabaratnam (2017); Manchanda (2020).
4. See also Porter (2018).
5. See, in particular, the 2007: "Edward W. Said and International Relations," featuring articles by Sheila Nair, Shampa Biswas, Geeta Chowdhry, Raymond Duvall, Latha Varadarajan, and L.H.M. Ling, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 36 (1). See also Salter (2010).
6. For more on the historical emergence of the discipline, see two important books by John Gunnell (1993, 2004). See also Farr and Seidelman (1993) and Schmidt (1998).
7. See also Hans Morgenthau, quoted in Guilhot (2017: 31); Rosenboim (2017).
8. See, for instance, Morgenthau's discussion of sovereignty and Thucydides; in particular, his insistence that the centrality of state interest "is indeed of the essence of politics and is unaffected by the circumstances of time and place" (Morgenthau 2005: 10).

9. From Armitage's perspective, the question scholars of the history of international thought should be asking today is not, "How did 'we'—whoever 'we' are—come to acquire the concept of the state" but rather, "How did 'we'—all of us in the world—come to imagine that we inhabit a world of states?" See Armitage (2013: 13).
10. See, among other texts on this subject, Hobson (2012).
11. Jodi Byrd, "Silence Will Fall: The Cultural Politics of Colonial Agnosia." Unpublished manuscript, 13, quoted in Ar dnt (2016).
12. Much of Vitalis's book is devoted to not only demonstrating that many of the earliest scholars of international politics (from the late nineteenth century onward) were white supremacists concerned with the demographics of race and imperialism but also with exploring the work of Black scholars of international politics in the United States who actually *did* write critically about imperialism well into the 1950s.
13. See Doyle (1986) for a paradigmatic, state-oriented reading of imperialism. Notable exceptions to this tendency are Chowdhury and Nair (2002); Seth (2007); Shilliam (2015).
14. See, for instance, Lebow and Reich (2014) and my critical exchange with the authors in Morefield (2014).
15. See Beitz (1999 [1979]); Shue (1996 [1980]). With very few exceptions, scholars of global justice such as Shue, Beitz, Michael Blake, Martha Nussbaum, Mathias Risse, Simon Caney, Joseph Carens, continue this Rawlsian-inspired modes of ideal moral theorizing.
16. See, for instance, two innovate, political theory re-readings of twentieth-century, anti-colonial cosmopolitan thought: Getachew (2019); Valdez (2019).
17. "It is as if," Said argued in this essay, "like nuclear elements with an assigned half-life, periods simply live and pass off, leaving their place to be covered up in the same slot by other periods."
18. For more on Said and Foucault, see Racevskis (2005).
19. See also Kramer (2011: 1349).
20. For an account of the imperial logic at work in the Round Table's notion of commonwealth, see Morefield (2014: ch. 3). For more critical investigations of the Round's links to imperialism and the role they played in the founding of British IR and US foreign policy think tanks, see Parmar (2002); Thakur, Davis, and Vale (2017).
21. In Said's words, Orientalist stereotypes of Arabs "have become the last acceptable form of denigration of foreign culture in the West" (Said 1997: xi).
22. Other scholars in the genre include Muthu (2003); Pitts (2005).
23. Andrew Fitzmaurice similarly concentrates on self-described liberal jurists and political figures well known in their time but hardly household names for political theorists today. See Fitzmaurice (2012: 122–140).
24. Quoted in Morefield (2014: 124). For a recent assessment of Curtis in particular, and the Round Table in general, see Davis, Thakur, and Vale (2021).

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CHAPTER 15

VARIETIES OF SOCIOLOGY IN INTER NATIONAL RELATIONS

Modernity, Capitalism, and Eurocentrism

EREN DUZGUN

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, much effort has been made to go beyond the parameters of conventional theorizing in International Relations (IR). In particular, several scholars, rooted in different sub-fields of sociology, have challenged the timeless and static notions of IR, shedding new light on the social and temporal dimension of international change. Of these efforts seeking to sociologize the discipline, International Political Sociology (IPS) and historical sociology have emerged as two of the most influential sub-fields.

IPS is an intellectual endeavor that is not easy to define and categorize. Perhaps necessarily so, for, the scholars associated with IPS have consciously defied any static definitions of IPS to keep the 'field' as open and hospitable as possible (Huysmans and Nogueira 2016: 299). In line with its deliberately ambiguous character, IPS has drawn from a variety of theoretical sources and contributed to a variety of thematic debates. Most notably, many IPS scholars have drawn insights from post-colonial theory, and the writings of Foucault and Bourdieu, to explore a diversity of theoretical and thematic issues. For example, through a focus on the spatial and temporal aspects of power relations, they have questioned analytical and disciplinary boundaries, categorical dichotomies, and conventional concepts used to study and explain world politics (Bigo and Walker 2007a, 2007b). While interrogating the familiar binaries (re)produced by positivist social sciences, such as the "inside" versus the "outside," the "traditional" versus the "modern," and the "private" versus the "public," scholars associated with IPS have contributed to a multiplicity of thematic debates, such as the regimes of surveillance, politics of exclusion and security, migration, environment, finance, and Eurocentrism (inter alia Seth 2013; Bilgin 2016; Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas 2012; Bhambra 2011; Soreanu 2010; Rojas 2016; Squire and Darling 2013; Alejandro 2018).

Historical sociology is no less variegated an endeavor than IPS. After all, just as studying history and sociology have taken different forms over time, so too has their

interrelationship: a multiplicity of historical sociologies has emerged, with different scholars using different doses of sociological abstraction and historical evidence to analyze the evolution of (large-scale) social processes, patterns, and institutions in history (Barkawi, Bell, and Zarakol, this volume; Lawson 2007). By emphasizing the time-referential, path-dependent, and contextually bound nature of social phenomena, historical sociologists have examined a wide array of themes ranging from the origins and machineries of "social power" to the role of revolutions in the making of the modern world, state formation, origins of authoritarianism, emergence of the modern self, and the emergence and workings of capitalist world economy (inter alia Mann 1986; Skocpol 1979; Tilly 1990; Moore 1966; Giddens 1987; Elias 2000; Wallerstein 1974).

In addition, historical sociological themes have found a strong echo within the IR community, especially since the 1980s. IR scholars have used, problematized, and contributed to the historical sociological debates on a variety of issues, including the nature of "modernity," "capitalism," and "sovereignty," which, in turn, helped to explore the historicity of their own subject matter, the "international." Consequently, historical sociology in IR (HSIR) has not only produced new interpretations of the roots and legacies of the modern international order but also systematically revealed the co-constitution of the "modern" and the "colonial," and the "East" and the "West," thereby leading to new ways of thinking about the problem of "geocultural difference" and Eurocentrism (inter alia Hobson, Lawson, and Rosenberg 2010; Halliday 2005; Linklater 2020; Anievas and Nisancioglu 2015; Rosenberg 1994; Anievas and Matin 2016; Buzan and Little 2000; Buzan and Lawson 2015; Lawson 2019; Hobson 2012; Teschke 2003; Lacher 2006; Zarakol 2022; Duzgun 2018a, 2018b, 2022a).

IPS and historical sociology share substantial commonalities in terms of their methodological principles and normative claims. They both call for a "transdisciplinary" social science, while advancing critiques of Eurocentrism based on similar methodological premises. This chapter seeks to pin down this common ground, while offering a sympathetic critique of IPS from a historical sociological perspective. I argue that IPS falls short in developing a convincing critique of Eurocentrism for two interrelated reasons. First, due to its subjectivist epistemology, IPS shies away from offering an alternative macro historical-sociological narrative through which to supplant the analytical frameworks it criticizes for Eurocentrism. Second, if the theoretical strength of IPS in relation to the problem of Eurocentrism lies in its "anti-presentism," I argue that the ability of IPS to capture socio-historical specificities and overcome Eurocentrism remains limited for it has not sufficiently advanced a systematic critique of "presentism." In particular, IPS does not problematize, hence implicitly accept, the historical narratives that project capitalism backwards in history, which, in turn, perpetuates hierarchical readings of world history. By problematizing presentist conceptions of "capitalism," I demonstrate that combining IPS with insights from a specific branch of historical materialist sociology, known as Political Marxism,

provides a new way of registering the polycentric formation of the modern social and international order, without resorting to presentist and hierarchical interpretations of world history.

IPS and historical sociology: Multiple temporalities and the issue of presentism

IPS is a broad church hosting different strands of critical scholarship in IR. Despite the theoretical and thematic diversity, however, it is underlined by a common concern for "transdisciplinarity." IPS is a consciously transdisciplinary endeavor that problematizes the analytically compartmentalized image of the modern world as well as mainstream conceptions of the "international." Understandably so, for the fragmentation of social life into ontologically distinct spheres such as the "economic," the "political," the "social," and the "international," with each sphere examined by a separate academic discipline, is integral to the convulsions brought into being by modernity. The uncritical use of these categories runs the risk of reading back and ontologizing the structure of modern society; that is, it imposes modern concepts onto differently constituted histories and life worlds. Departing from such transhistorical conceptions, IPS postulates a plural and "de-disciplinarized" social science, one that cannot be reached simply through "more familiar appeals to an interdisciplinary discourse" (Basaran et al. 2016: 1; Guillaume and Bilgin 2016: 7).

Equally important, IPS invokes a temporally and spatially sensitive conceptual vocabulary by defying singular, homogenous, and secular conceptions of historical time (Kessler 2012; Seth 2013; Helliwell and Hindess 2016). It emphasizes that the analytical categories and concepts that the social sciences presume to be universal (such as "capital," "nature," "state," "individual," "international," "security," and "modernity") are not universally and transhistorically applicable; instead, their relevance (especially for the non-Western world) has to be qualified with a view to spatial and temporal specificities (Seth 2009; Bilgin 2016). Take, as an example, the way in which modernization theory understands the concept of "modernity." In the modernization view, "political," "economic," and "cultural" spheres, each driven by a distinct set of values, interacted in specific ways in history that ultimately produced the "modern" world of economically industrial, politically liberal, and culturally secular entities, at least in the West. Specifying the "stages" of and "preconditions" to "modernity" in the West was then used to identify why these were "absent" elsewhere in the world (e.g. Rostow 1960). It is no wonder that in the modernization lexicon, geo-spatial differences were understood in terms of such hierarchical binaries as "developed" versus "developing," which were, in turn, instrumental in fostering the image of modernization as a unilinear evolutionary developmental path through which all societies must pass. Modernity, in other words, was understood as a more-or-less

singular process for all societies, while its developmental sequence and pattern was abstracted from the presumed historical evolution of an ideal-type of modernity, which Western Europe and the United States are thought to epitomize.

Such uni-temporal and unilinear conceptions of modernity demonstrate a lack of systematic engagement with the international dimension of social change. They perpetuate a "presentist" methodology that takes the assumption of self-contained societies as an ontological given, hence reading back in history the socio-spatial consequences of modernity, that is *relative* territorial exclusivity and societal fixity. This, in turn, generates the problem of Eurocentrism: while the West is seen to have developed in line with an internal and universal logic, others are stored away as historical deviations or sociological exceptions from this general standard of "progress" (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004). In short, existing narratives of modernity, "many of which read contemporary ('standard') concepts back into history end up reinforcing Eurocentrism" (Bilgin 2016: 494). The clear inference is that IPS diagnoses a strong connection between the lack of the international, "methodological presentism," and Eurocentrism.

Indeed, given its concern for trans-disciplinarity, anti-presentism and anti-Eurocentrism, IPS shares a substantial methodological and normative ground with historical sociology. To begin with, historical sociology, too, is a transhistorical endeavor. Perhaps necessarily so, for, as Philip Abrams notes, sociology is bound to be "concerned with (historical) eventuation, because that is how (social) structuring happens …, [just as] history must be theoretical, because that is how structuring is apprehended." Therefore, continues Abrams, instead of trying to "give historical work more 'social context' or … sociological work more 'historical background'," "there might be much more to be gained by reconstituting history and sociology as historical sociology," a transdisciplinary enterprise (Abrams 1982: xi, 2, ix).

A transdisciplinary historical sociology seems essential to the comprehension of the "social." Nevertheless, the "social" offered by social theory has long been criticized for lacking "temporal" and "international" dimensions. The voluminous works of Perry Anderson, Charles Tilly, and Immanuel Wallerstein have all tried to fill this lacuna, offering explicitly internationalist and temporally cognizant accounts of world historical change. For example, commenting on the generalizability of his "war-making/state-making" paradigm, Charles Tilly (1990: 16) writes that "not that the states of Africa or Latin America are now recapitulating the European experience. On the contrary: the fact that European states formed in a certain way, then imposed their power on the rest of the world, guarantees that non-European experience will be different." Likewise, Perry Anderson emphasizes the cumulative impact of IR in constituting sociological differences (and vice versa). By doing so, his analysis seeks to challenge what he calls "chronological monism," that is a "uniform temporal medium" in which "events or institutions appear to bathe in a more or less continuous and homogeneous temporality" (Anderson 1974: 9–10).

That said, it is not clear whether historical sociology's acknowledgment of internationality and temporality has resulted in a full departure from unilinear and uni-temporal conceptions of historical change. For example, in Tilly's historical sociology, war (or international relations in general) makes states, yet it is not clear whether the opposite equally applies. The social seems to carry little weight in shaping back international dynamics (Teschke 2003: 123). Therefore, despite his formal acknowledgment of the temporal dimension of world historical change, Tilly does not take us particularly far in understanding the "international" as part of an evolving historical continuum. He underspecifies the changing social and temporal content of the "international" in his analysis of state formation. Concomitantly, Tilly's analysis does not tell us exactly how to pre-empt Eurocentric assumptions about the nature of non-Western state formation, such as the language of "fragile," "failed," or "rogue" states.

The failure to more fully historicize the "international" implies that making the international intelligible in temporal terms requires a deeper ontology in which the international is an organic and constitutive part of social reality from the very outset (Rosenberg 2006). Therefore, the challenge for historical sociology has been to develop a conceptual vocabulary that allows us to combine in thought the international and the social. Indeed, the late Fred Halliday's work, which provided one of the earliest and most sophisticated examples of HSIR, sought to register precisely that: while recognizing the mutually constitutive character of international and social relations, Halliday (2002) hinted at the need for a "unified" social theory in order to better explain this co-constitutive relation. Until recently, however, Halliday's call for an "international sociology" remained merely a fleeting reflection. Halliday himself planted the seed of a unified theory, yet did not give it a systematic treatment. Two major attempts have been recently made to fill this gap. Justin Rosenberg and his disciples' reworking of the notion of "Uneven and Combined Development" (UCD), on the one hand, and Julian Go and George Lawson's call for a "Global Historical Sociology," on the other hand, were generated as precisely such attempts to formulate a unitary theory of domestic and international relations (e.g. Rosenberg 2006; Anievas and Nisancioglu 2015; Duzgun 2022b; Matin 2013a; Go and Lawson 2017).

In summary, tackling the issues of presentism, mono-temporality, and Eurocentrism has been central to the development of IPS and historical sociology alike. In particular, both IPS and international historical sociology (IHS) involve an examination of our conceptual apparatuses. Both approaches defy explicitly the utilization of concepts and categories in a transhistorical fashion. They seek to problematize and define concepts in a way that would capture their historically specific and internationally changing dynamics, which they consider to be a panacea for the problem of Eurocentrism. All that said, despite sharing similar analytical goals, neither IPS nor historical sociology, in my view, have fully overcome the problem of Eurocentrism, for they have not sufficiently confronted the issue of presentism in a systematic way. This is the subject of the next section.

Common concerns, different paths: IPS, historical sociology, and the issue of Eurocentrism

IPS insists that addressing Eurocentrism is not merely about "studying other parts of the world"; it is not just about introducing non-Western voices to the story of the constitution of the modern world. Instead, going beyond Eurocentrism, first and foremost, requires a conceptual intervention; that is, "it requires re-thinking the concepts and theories through which 'we' make sense of global history and politics" (Bilgin 2018: 1). Such a rethinking of our conceptual toolkit is critical, for most social science concepts have a European genealogy; they have been shaped in the context of European modernity and linked to the colonial and racist practices of European powers. Therefore, using them in a uni-temporal way risks imposing Western ways of knowing and being onto differently constituted pasts, silencing the particularities of the non-Western experience with modernity. IPS thus invokes an anti-presentist and multi-temporal methodology that counters the superimposition of "Western" categories onto the non-Western world. Indeed, the failure to develop such a methodology leads to a form of epistemic violence, for "outside Europe, these concepts/categories, embedded in and given life through the institutions and practices of colonial governmentality … served to disseminate and 'make real' what they (wrongly) assumed to be universal features of all human and social worlds" (Seth 2014: 318). In this sense, for IPS, concepts and categories of the social sciences have not been neutral tools "merely offering a cognition of a world outside." These concepts are not out there only to understand the modern world, but they are part and parcel of the power relations that constitute a Eurocentric understanding of global modernity.

In short, IPS problematizes the nexus between knowledge and power to deconstruct the notion of "Western" superiority and priority in world history. By countering the naturalization and eternalization of Western categories, IPS reveals the political and ideological nature of positivist thinking across the social sciences. As such, scholars of IPS have contested the Eurocentric roots of such key IR concepts as "sovereignty," "balance of power," and "security" (e.g. Bilgin 2010; Grovogui 2002; Barkawi and Laffey 2006). Furthermore, by highlining the constitutive role of imperialism and colonialism, they have sought to undermine the uni-temporal historical narratives and geo-cultural dichotomies conventionally used to explain world politics (e.g. Seth 2011; Bhambra 2011; Shilliam 2011). Rethinking geo-cultural binaries is usually underlined by a process of conceptual "excavation," which, "by studying 'intertwined and overlapping histories' of humankind," aims to reveal the "multiple authorship" of what are viewed as "autonomously produced" ideas and institutions (Bilgin 2018: 3). In short, reimagining IR from an IPS perspective forces us to rethink IR's conceptions of time, agency, and its conceptualization of "difference," and as such, it has the potential to activate a powerful critique of Eurocentrism.

In this respect, IPS shares many affinities with HSIR. Yet, two interrelated differences remain. First, although most IPS is underwritten by an explicitly internationalist critique, its proponents have not offered an alternative general theoretical framework for investigating international connections and differences. Indeed, this critique seems to be caused (at least partly) by IPS's ambivalent relation to social science and social scientific "explanation." As argued above, IPS scholars oppose the transhistoricization and universalization of social science categories. They contend that, given their European genealogy, "modern knowledge, and the social sciences that formalize it, … are at once indispensable—but also inadequate—to making sense of [global modernity]"; that is, social scientific explanation is "indispensable" in that it explains "*some* of the ways in which the world has been remade, and is now experienced and lived." Yet, it is also "inadequate," for "it only corresponds to *some* of these ways"; that is, it inevitably bears the mark of its Western origins, hence injecting a Eurocentric bias into our analysis from the very outset (Seth 2014: 318). As such, IPS reminds us of the necessity to adopt a reflexive and critical attitude toward the limits of social scientific thinking. It insists that analytical thinking should involve a reinterpretation of our concepts in a way that would capture diverse ways of knowing and being in a world that is at once interconnected and "irreducibly plural." Innovative as it may be, however, IPS does not tell us exactly how to advance such a non-Eurocentric agenda, that is what to do after we realize that power and knowledge are mutually reinforcing; how to reconcile the "universal" and the "particular" in conceptual and logical terms (Matin 2013b). Furthermore, IPS scholars aptly emphasize the "diverse," "intertwined," or "interconnected" nature of the global experience with modernity; yet diversity or interconnectedness, by themselves, are not substitutes for a macro-historical narrative that systematically addresses presentism and Eurocentrism. Of course, IPS has produced narratives emphasizing the co-constitution of the West and the non-West, but these accounts have been predominantly concerned with examining situated and localized practices. Combined with their subjectivist stance on the production of modern knowledge, IPS scholars have not advanced an alternative macro-historical sociological narrative and outlined clearly constructed methodological propositions through which to overcome Eurocentrism (Vasilaki 2012).

Second, both IPS and historical sociology have noted that overcoming Eurocentrism requires an intervention into the history not only of the non-European world but also of Europe. For example, Pinar Bilgin (2018) writes that "the very notion of state that we adopt in the study of world politics has its limitations not only when transplanted to other parts of the world, but also when studying Europe." Similarly, Sanjay Seth contends that let alone the non-Western world, "modernity and the knowledges of which it is cause and effect are not fully applicable even to the West" (Seth 2014: 318). In other words, "we need to rethink the idea that even Western modernity was accompanied by rationalization, disenchantment and so on; that this might be more the mythology of modernity than the reality of it" (Seth 2016: 12).

This critical stance on the myth of European modernity, in turn, makes IPS comparable to a branch of historical sociology commonly known as the California School. The California School has sought to dismantle the Eurocentric assumptions about the rise of Europe by emphasizing the relative backwardness of Europe and the importance, if not superiority, of the commercial networks, technologies, and institutions of some of the non-European regions throughout most of world history. James Blaut, for example, has argued that there was nothing "unique" about Western Europe before 1492; different expressions of "proto-capitalism," such as commercial agriculture, monetized rent, and long-distance trade, existed in most parts of Asia and Africa, therefore they must be considered to have fostered "the same potential for evolution towards capitalism" (Blaut 1993: 160–165). In a similar vein, Kenneth Pomeranz (2000: 16–24) contends that well-developed commercial actors and institutions were equally present in the "core" areas of Asia (primarily China) and the core areas of Western Europe (primarily England), which experienced "very similar processes of commercialisation and proto-industrial growth" before 1800. The implication is that, according to the California School, market dynamics, market actors, and market rationality alone cannot be used to explain the final "divergence" of the West from the non-West. Blaut and Pomeranz eventually concur that capitalism in the West would have never "taken off" without the "extra-economic advantages" which other parts of the world did not have, such as the forceful appropriation and relative proximity of colonial/natural resources, favorable "trade winds," and so on (Blaut 1993: 180–182; Pomeranz 2000: 437–445).

Obviously, IPS is not in complete agreement with the California School. Sanjay Seth, for example, identifies three caveats with respect to the California School. First, "such a strategy … [of] bringing the non-West into the account of the emergence of modernity need not, in and of itself, undermine the Eurocentrism of the conventional account." For this position continues to "assign a pivotal role to Europe," while acknowledging "the 'co-production', as it were, of modernity." Second, "even if the non-West is made part of the story of modernity …, this only pushes back, or reframes, the question of European exceptionalism: why was it Europe that exploited others, rather than vice versa?" In other words, "even where the normative valence changes—where Europe's 'dynamism' begins to look more like 'rapacity'—what is it about Europe that made it unique? can still remain the question." Third, this intellectual strategy seeking to map out the non-European contributions to modernity is "hostage to (empirical) fortune"; that is, empirically speaking, there is always the risk that non-Western societies may turn out to be not as central to the constitution of modernity as their Western counterparts. Of course, "this is … an exceedingly unlikely hypothetical"; yet, at least "in principle," there is such a possibility, which, in turn, according to Seth, points to the limits of existing anti-Eurocentric theorizing in historical sociology (Seth 2016: 5–6).

As such, Seth draws attention to some of the potential conundrums in anti-Eurocentric historical sociology of the California School type. Yet, it is debatable whether Seth

provides a tangible alternative to what he thinks is problematic in the California School narratives of global modernity. He argues that "any intellectual strategy that seeks to delink modernity from Europe principally on historico-empirical grounds may be following a strategy not best suited to its aims" (2016: 6). The way out of this conundrum, he suggests (2016: 9), requires

> a rethinking of the relation of modernity and the knowledge by which we know and describe it; one in which the knowledge through which we understand modernity is constitutive of that which it purportedly merely describes. This does not provide a better answer to the question with which we began—*how to think with modernity without Eurocentrism*. It does, however, recast that question in ways that are fruitful [emphasis added].

What this critical rethinking really entails, in my view, is not clear. Seth says it would entail an awareness that

> modernity and the knowledge that accompanies and constitutes it is not privileged, and is not seen as revealing underlying truths, but rather seen as one way of knowing and inhabiting the earth. Only then will our categories, explanations and imagination become as rich, capacious and diverse as the world(s) we actually inhabit.

Fair enough. But the point remains. IPS aptly identifies potentially contradictory premises of the dominant anti-Eurocentric narratives in historical sociology, yet it does not explicate what happens after we acknowledge that power and knowledge are mutually constitutive. IPS refrains from offering a clear theoretical and historical alternative; therefore, it is not clear whether IPS intends to provide a palliative treatment or a more definitive remedy for the problem of Eurocentrism (cf. Vasilaki 2012).

The contradictions of presentist anti-Eurocentrism

IPS would be able to offer a more effective solution to Eurocentrism if it pursued more systematically its own methodological goals; that is, IPS has not systematically engaged with the problem of presentism, which undermines our effort "to think with modernity without Eurocentrism." Let me briefly explain by re-problematizing the California School.

As discussed earlier, the conventional anti-Eurocentric narratives associated with the California School refuse to see the rise of capitalism in terms of the "abilities/advantages" exclusive to Europe. According to John Hobson (2004), for example, most of the abilities and institutions associated with capitalism and modernity were, in fact, present in the East. "Long-distance trade," "rationalist capitalist investors," a set of virtues conducive to capital accumulation, technological inventiveness, and states that successfully pacified "internal" rivals and actively promoted the "background conditions necessary for capitalism" existed in several parts of the non-Western world, whereas "Europe remained mired in a backward agrarianism

and a relatively weak commercialism" at least until the 1500s (Hobson 2004: 296–297). Furthermore, even when the West finally eclipsed the major Asian powers in the nineteenth century, this was made possible not based on its Indigenous capabilities and resources but initially by "diffusion" and then the forceful appropriation of Eastern ideas, technologies, and institutions, alongside a number of historical contingencies such as the fortuitous conquest of the Americas.

IPS scholars have already pointed to some of the logical and historical tensions in the California School rendition of global modernity. Yet, what is overlooked by IPS is that the California School narratives are deeply rooted in a particular form of presentism, which, in turn, reproduces hierarchical readings of world history. The California School has attempted to overcome the Eurocentrism of the old model by simply stretching the spatial reach of, rather than contesting, the presentist view that capitalism is the outcome of the "unimpeded" growth of wealth, trade, and commercial actors; that is, the California School takes the existence of age-old practices of exchange, commercial classes, private property, and wage labor as necessary indicators of the existence of capitalism in history. Yet, the problem is that all these phenomena, in different yet comparable forms, existed almost throughout history; that is, they can be dated back to ancient societies. Of course, capitalism has increased the volume of production, commerce, and the size of a commodifiable workforce; yet, taking these as necessary indicators of the beginning of capitalism in history simply collapses capitalism's consequences into its causes. Therefore, the unqualified equation of private property, wage labor, and commerce with the beginning of capitalism tends to presume the prior existence of capitalism to explain its rise; that is, it ends up seeing capitalism present at all times and in all places (in embryo form), hence extrapolating back in history the logic and dynamics of the present socio-economic order (see the chapter by Powel in this volume).

An important implication follows the acceptance of presentist narratives of capitalism as the basis for a non-Eurocentric theorization of world history. The purported antecedents of capitalism are no longer seen as exclusively Western but extended in time and space and considered available at least in "some" regions in the non-Western world. For example, Kenneth Pomeranz (2000: 27) notes that only certain parts of China, Japan, and "to a lesser extent" North India shared the same capitalist dynamics as Western Europe. Similarly, John Hobson (2004) considers only China, India, and the realm of Islam as having had a proto-capitalist potential in history. Differently from Pomeranz and Hobson, James Blaut assumes that capitalism was a universal phenomenon; that is, capitalism existed all around the world, albeit on a "spatially and socially small scale." Yet, he then admits that his belief in the "equal capability of human beings … in all cultures and regions" eventually caused him to "theorize well beyond available evidence," especially in parts of his argument concerning pre-1492 Africa (Blaut 1993: 42, 153).

Anti-Eurocentrism, as such, reproduces Eurocentrism in a new form. Anti-Eurocentrism either universalizes the origins of capitalism based on empirically unsupported "imagined commonalities" (Bryant 2006: 418) or hierarchically re-provincializes the world according to the degree of development of the "preconditions" of capitalism. In other words, Anti-Eurocentric accounts increase the number of regions/areas that they consider as capitalist, yet they do so without overcoming hierarchical readings of world history. Likewise, the effort to overcome Eurocentrism by emphasizing the non-Western (colonial) "contributions" to European commerce, technologies, and institutions falls into a similar logical trap (e.g. Anievas and Nisancioglu 2015; Hobson 2020). For the only way for such accounts to be truly non-Eurocentric is by showing that everyone equally contributed to the rise of capitalist Europe. Given the impossibility of "equal" contributions, we are bound to produce "deviant" or "less important" historical cases. We end up offering a non-Eurocentric history only by creating new spatial hierarchies (Duzgun 2018c, 2020).

Relatedly, trying to narrate an all-inclusive history of the transition to capitalist modernity (i.e. a narrative purporting that everyone showed proto-capitalist tendencies, or that everyone "contributed" or "could have contributed" to the rise of capitalism in Europe) tends to reproduce perhaps the most Eurocentric assumption that capitalism represents a superior mode of organizing human relations so that everyone must have contributed to its rise (Wood 2001; Wallerstein 1997). Moreover, as Sajed and Inayatullah (2016: 206–207) point out, trying to highlight the role of non-Western agency in the rise of European capitalism may end up covering up "Europe's sins … in the devastation of the third world," hence "diluting the responsibility of the violence behind Western colonialism." All combined, anti-Eurocentrism, as such, turns into a self-defeating exercise.

In short, pondering the problem of geo-spatial differentiation in terms of the transhistorical preconditions and determinations of capitalist development reproduces hierarchical readings of world history. Failing to detect this presentist trap in historical sociology is a significant oversight for IPS, for one of the main pillars of the IPS project itself is the argument that the categories and concepts of social sciences are not transhistorically applicable, but space- and time-dependent. For a truly nonhierarchical world history, IPS thus needs to assert more systematically its own claim for a nonpresentist methodology; that is, it needs to challenge the view that capitalism emerged once certain European, non-European, or universal human resources/technologies/abilities accumulated.

Rethinking "capitalism": Beyond the triumphalism of the West and the victimization of the non-West

The argument so far signals that, to step out of the Eurocentric cage, IPS needs to sterilize the history of capitalism from presentist assumptions; that is, it needs to challenge the view that capitalism is a natural, necessary category of human development, growing out of pre-existent social patterns.

Here, we encounter two dilemmas. First, the argument that capitalism is not a transhistorical and natural phenomenon implies that capitalism must have a spatio-temporal beginning. However, such an intellectual strategy seeking to postulate a specific birthday and birthplace for capitalism runs the risk of "internalism" and Eurocentric exceptionalism. Bhambra (2011), for example, argues that any attempt at locating the origins of capitalism in Western Europe inevitably presupposes "internalist" "ideal-types," hence leading to the problematic assumption of European "priority" in history. Such efforts, according to Bhambra, unavoidably feed into hierarchical narratives of world history in which Europe is considered more progressive than, and developmentally prior to, the non-Western world. Therefore, it seems that while the transhistoricization of capitalism generates logically problematic and normatively unexpected results, trying to specify the spatio-temporal conditions of capitalism's emergence is equally problematic, running the risk of depicting Europe as the sole proprietor of rationality and institutions conducive to modernity. The second dilemma is that it is true that highlighting the role of non-Western agency may diminish the accountability for the atrocities of Western colonialism. Yet, on the flip side, restraining non-Western agency to highlight the violence of capitalist modernity proves to be equally problematic, as it leads to what John Hobson calls "Eurofetishism"; that is, it may end up relegating the non-Western peoples "to the status of irrelevant, helpless and 'passive objects/victims' " of global capitalism (Hobson 2020: 22).

Is an alternative anti-Eurocentrism possible beyond these paradoxes? How can we go beyond the triumphalism of the West and victimization of the non-West without creating new spatial hierarchies and without invoking normatively problematic assumptions? I suggest that our ability to enact non-Western agency in a noncontradictory fashion depends on our ability to systematically pursue an anti-presentist methodology. In particular, an anti-presentist conception of capitalism helps to distinguish between "capitalist modernity" and "radical modernity" in history, which then can be used to "re-think modernity without Eurocentrism."

For a non-presentist conception of capitalism, we can allow political Marxism (PM) to carry some water for us. To the critical reader, such an analytical strategy may sound rather contradictory, for PM is perhaps one of the most commonly criticized approaches to global history for its Eurocentrism and methodological internalism (e.g. Hobson 2020). I have systematically evaluated these claims elsewhere, arguing that the conventional critique of PM is off the mark (Duzgun 2020). Although I agree that PM has suffered from a lack of empirical engagement with the non-Western world, PM provides important analytical tools to deepen the international sociological imagination in a way that helps to overcome the paradoxes diagnosed above. Let me briefly explain.

PM was born in the 1970s as a reaction to the presentism prevalent in conventional Marxist and non-Marxist accounts of the transition to capitalism (Brenner 1985a; Wood 2002). Based on Marx's later writings, political Marxists have argued that the transition to capitalism cannot be understood as the *quantitative* extension of any "economic" phenomena; that is, capitalism is not just more of the same thing; it is not just more trade, more markets, more private property, or more wage-labor. Instead, the transitions to capitalism required a *qualitative* shift in the way societal relations were organized such that the customary conditions of social reproduction were systematically undercut, and the market was made the ultimate basis for holding and expanding the means of life. From this angle, capitalism is best understood in terms of socially and temporally varying ways of organizing human relations and the institutions that produce the historically specific impact of "market dependence" (Wood 2002). Put differently, transitions to capitalism did not follow a universal pattern, yet all transitions, in principle, required a strategic political intervention and an institutional set-up to systematically eliminate nonmarket survival strategies so that the market could turn into the main (not the only) institution responsible for social reproduction.

PM explains the emergence of capitalism in a way that does not already contain capitalism's logic or dynamic as part of historical explanation. Markets by themselves have no inherent tendency to generate a "market economy"; the latter can be established only based on the annihilation of long-standing communal systems of social reproduction. For capitalism to rise, therefore, an entirely unprecedented institutional mechanism was imposed on human beings. A variety of systematic interventions were made into the political, legal, and institutional structure governing social reproduction, which led to the development of market-dependent societies. What is at stake in conceptualizing capitalism as market-dependence, therefore, is a departure from a "presentist" interpretation to a "non-presentist" one, that is from a transhistorically cumulating capitalism toward a conception of capitalism as a qualitative break and epochal shift in human history.

What is more, PM not only provides a historically specific conception of capitalism but also gives us the tools to capture the internationally and temporally changing dynamics of transitions to capitalism. PM insists that there can be no "transhistorical laws" governing the path to capitalism, because of the changing intersocietal context of capitalist transformation as well as the variations in social reactions from "below." For "once breakthroughs to ongoing capitalist economic development took place in various regions these irrevocably transformed the conditions and the character of the analogous processes, which were to occur subsequently elsewhere" (Brenner 1985b: 322; Wood 1998: 30). Thus, by recognizing the cumulatively changing character of IR, PM defies transhistorical interpretations of "market dependence." This implies that, while market dependence signifies the minimum socio-legal prerequisites to the existence of capitalist social relations, its focus cannot be on any static phenomena/policy. Depending on past socio-institutional legacies and the timing and international context

of capitalist transition, the mechanisms that ensure market dependence take different forms. The socio-institutional content of market dependence is not fixed but cumulatively changes. As a consequence, PM neither sets up pre-given norms for the transition to capitalism nor treats subsequent transitions as counter models to privileged ideal types.

The adoption of such a historically specific and historically dynamic conception of capitalism can enable IPS scholars to reconsider the question of Eurocentrism on three interrelated grounds. First, given capitalism's epochal distinctiveness, the initial emergence of capitalism can only be understood as a "historical contingency." More precisely, once we adopt a historically specific understanding of capitalism as market dependence, we find out that the origin of capitalism had nothing to do with the maturation and combination of some superior human qualities linked to favorable commercial, environmental, or technological factors but was the unintended consequence of social and geopolitical struggles that emerged only in England during the early modern period (Brenner 1985a). Furthermore, continental European states did not follow their Albion counterpart with a time lag, as is often presumed. In its stead, capitalism began to spread to the states of continental Europe only from the nineteenth century onward and as a protracted process compelled by the geopolitical pressures engendered, directly or otherwise, by the power of England's capitalist economy (Wood 1991: 159–160). The implication is that by emphasizing the "contingent" emergence and "externally induced" expansion of capitalist social relations, PM does not assume capitalism as always present in pre-capitalist history; therefore, it does not construct spatial hierarchies according to the degree of development of pre-existent commercial abilities, technological inventiveness, entrepreneurial skills, geopolitical contributions, and so on. As such, PM leaves no reason to think of the West and the non-West in terms of a set of "civilizational" hierarchies based on the relative presence or absence of the generic "preconditions" of capitalism.

Second, in the spatial hiatus opened between England and continental Europe, a further possibility for a nonhierarchical reading of the non-Western world crystallizes. Namely, an appreciation of the contingent emergence of capitalism in England and its externally driven development in continental Europe refutes the image of capitalism as an organic category of socio-economic development in the West as well as the non-West. In other words, once we dispense with the transhistorical conceptions of capitalism's origins, we recognize that the early modern West and the non-West, despite several nuances within and between themselves, were marked by fundamentally similar forms of socio-economic organization, at least until the end of the eighteenth century. "Tributary" social forms, based on "redistribution" and state-based appropriation of peasant surpluses, remained the basis of human economy, rather than a mere appendix to it, both in the West and the non-West (except England) (Brenner 1985a; Teschke 2003). There was no "Asian mode of production," nor was there a more-or-less singular proto-capitalist "Western" path to modern development. Instead, as Eric Wolf (1982: chs 3–4)

argues, continental European development up to the nineteenth century was characterized by forms of tributary organization similar to those that we typically find in non-European states. By the same token, the subsequent transitions to capitalist modernity in the West and the non-West were imposed from "above" both in the West and the non-West, which required a fundamental transformation of the existing social relations, institutions, and moral codes in both milieux (Duzgun 2018c, 2020).

In this light, the non-Western world no longer appears as an "aberration" from or an imitation of a generically defined "Western European" path to capitalism. Non-Western societies were neither "bad" copies of capitalism nor are they valued only insofar as they contributed to the (imagined) origins of "European" capitalism. Emphasizing capitalism's contingent emergence and geopolitically driven expansion enables a historical narrative in which we can keep England responsible and accountable for the origin of capitalism, while re-activating the agency of non-Western peoples in the making of the modern social and international system. As such, IPS can now begin to rethink the question of "multiple beginnings" and co-constitution of the West and the non-West (Bilgin 2016: 500) in a way that eschews presentist and hierarchical readings of world history. IPS now stands on a stronger foundation, better equipped to capture the heterogeneously constituted origins and outcomes of (early) modernity.

Third, once we depart from the evolutionary conceptions of the origins and expansion of capitalism, we begin to recover the globality of "modernity" in a new light. Whatever is meant by "modernity" and whether one chooses to emphasize the "bright" or "dark" side of it, in most historical sociology scholarship modernity is used to refer to a mixed bundle of transformations and innovations emblematic of the transition to the "modern" world, such as capitalism, colonialism, secularism, individualism, exclusive territoriality, citizenship, equality, nationalism, private property, and industrialization (e.g. Buzan and Lawson 2015: 71). The point is that, once we recover the historical specificity of the capitalist market, this blanket conception of "modernity" collapses; that is, we discover that capitalism cannot be easily subsumed under a singular conception of "modernity" (or vice versa). We find out that while a "capitalist modernity" initially and contingently developed in England in the post-medieval period, which led to the birth of at least some capitalism-related aspects of "modernity" (such as abstract individuality, the culture of productivity, and industrialization), the most progressive aspects of modernity (such as demands for radical/universal equality, popular will, a critical stance toward authority, a commitment to universal human emancipation, anti-imperialism, and a radical "reason") prevailed in parts of the world wherein capitalist social relations were, by and large, absent (cf. Wood 1997).

This suggests that unlike capitalist modernity, the ideas of radical equality, freedom, and humanism, conventionally considered to have provided the context for "radical modernity" in Europe, could be found everywhere. The concept of "radical modernity" thus points to a universal legacy transmitted interactively and revitalized continuously throughout the globe, hence unleashing a novel non-Eurocentric ground for imagining

world history "from below" (e.g. Grovogui 2006; Bogues 2011). In other words, in thinking of modernity in a nonhierarchical way, "capitalism", or "capitalist modernity", leads us up a blind alley. By contrast, radical modernity points to a common egalitarian and emancipatory legacy rooted in the universality of our "noncapitalist" past. As such, it can be used as an alternative entry point for rethinking the interconnectedness of global history. It serves as a common denominator for the interactive accumulation and combination of a universal and fundamentally similar legacy; therefore, it has the potential to recover the agency of the non-West without creating new spatial hierarchies and victimizing the non-Western world (Duzgun 2022c, 2024, forthcoming).

Conclusion

In this chapter, my main argument has been that IPS has not proceeded far enough to solve the problem of Eurocentrism precisely because it does not sufficiently abide by its own methodological underpinnings. IPS has correctly identified mono-temporality and "presentism" as one of the main reasons for the persistence of Eurocentrism in IR. Presentism obscures that the core categories and concepts used to analyze world politics have their origins in an ideal-typical understanding of the European experience with modernity; therefore, utilizing these categories in a way that does not pay attention to their socio-temporal context introduces a Eurocentric bias to our analysis of world politics. That said, I have argued that it remains debatable to what extent IPS has been able to fully activate this non-presentist potential. In particular, I have argued that IPS does not problematize, hence implicitly accept, the historical sociological narratives that project capitalism backwards in history, which, in turn, perpetuates hierarchical readings of world history. I have shown that IPS would benefit from engaging with a particular branch of historical materialist sociology known as political Marxism, which can help IPS raise new questions and provide new answers about the polycentric and interactive constitution of global modernity.

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CHAPTER 16

HISTORICIZING THE GLOBAL

BRIEG POWEL

> Do not think only of the short time span, do not believe that only the actors which make the most noise are the most authentic—there are other, quieter ones too.
>
> Fernand Braudel (1980: 38)

INTRODUCTION

Amidst analyses of apparent shifts in "world order" associated with failed Western interventions and the growing influence of non-Western states such as China and Russia, there is discernible scholarly interest in the origins of Western global hegemony and past eras of non-Western global political prominence. Seminal studies by Subrahmanyam (1997), Pomerantz (2000), and Hobson (2004) underscored the global interconnectivity at the heart of the so-called "rise of the West" whilst decentering understandings of global history. Others have focused more specifically on the order and composition of the "international" in the past, either highlighting alternatives to systems of modern states within Europe (Spruyt 1996) or international orders dominated by non-Western actors (Phillips and Sharman 2015; Zarakol 2022). These suggest how the past brims with alternatives to state- and Euro-centered "international" orders of the present; alternatives involving a multiplicity of actors of different form whose interrelations produced the global–political–social of their time.

Such works, however, are not representative of the broader field of historical studies of the "international." I argue here that our grasp of history in international, political, and sociological scholarship is parochial in relation not only to space and unit of analysis but also time. In disciplinary International Relations (IR), few studies delve deeper than 1500 ce and fewer still 1000 ce. This includes those mentioned above and is despite their successes in challenging Euro- and actor-centrism. The general failure stems, I argue, from the long-held association of the "international" with the Weberian-Western state. This view excludes "polities" (see below) without a governing structure reminiscent of Weberian-Western models and, with them, entire eras of human history. Meanwhile, in other fields both professional and academic, observers of humanity's current crises are increasingly aware of the long-term gestation of global challenges. For example, studies of climate change link humanity's current and future predicaments with its much deeper past (Chakrabarty 2018; also see Brooke 2014). Other problems

—including challenges to democratic forms of government and trends in inequality, alongside the use of big data to explore such problems—also demand a longer-term historical outlook in many areas of policymaking (Guldi and Armitage 2014). This "tempocentricity" represents a failure to recognize that one's experience of the past and the significance awarded to parts of it are inter-subjective. Whilst not new, tempo-centricity has been granted a new urgency by the escalating climate crisis and the shift to more global perspectives in academic scholarship. Yet, efforts to decenter our temporal frames of reference are rarer than those to spatially decenter analysis.

This chapter proceeds from a recognition of the limitations of tempo-centric, "evental" understandings (i.e. centered around specific events) of the international based around "benchmark dates" to explore alternative, multilayered and multi-timespan approaches. It reveals how a priori social scientific preferences for the present are insufficient, preferring historians' sensitivity to the combinations of multiple layers of time that produce the present. These layers include the deeper past of the *longue durée* and, consequently, the chapter considers the extent to which the deeper past is evident in existing scholarship on the "international." In so doing, it reveals how the temporal borders of scholarship on the global have been determined by a preoccupation with the state as an idealized political form. This preoccupation has produced disciplines incapable of analyzing human realities across time and space (henceforth "time–space") beyond those involving such "states." Such "states" have also been constructed as apex units in stage-based evolutionary models grounded in racist-colonial epistemologies that reinforce Eurocentric historicizations of a state-centric "international" rather than a "global" of diverse forms of political actors. The chapter closes by exploring alternative modes of analysis that might allow for a broadening of inquiry across time–space.

Tempo-centrism and the "horror of the event"

Tempo-centric perspectives extrapolate the present into the past in an "inverted form of path dependency" (Hobson 2002: 9) or "subtraction" (Pluciennik 2005: 12). With this comes the dangers of "presentism" (Buzan and Little 2000; Cello 2018) or "chronocentrism" (Powelson 1994): the reading of the past as if it operated according to the same logics as the present whilst also prioritizing the past(s) that most closely resemble(s) the present. So prevalent have such understandings become that they are labelled the "hegemonic scholarly *modus operandi*" of some social sciences (Inglis 2010: 105). Consequently, the contingencies of the past and present are ignored, with scholars trapped as "situated agents" in the present, motivated by concerns that are results of this "situatedness" rather than by what concerned those in the past itself (Bevir 2011: 111). The past is therefore made relevant because of its relationship to our present, portrayed as mere prologue to what is now rather than as a distinctive location

in time–space. This risks obscuring alternative possibilities and ways of doing of the past. It also privileges the present as superior to the past (Inglis 2010: 118), with only those points in the past that are identifiably steps in the development of the present deemed worthy of study.

Presentism is encouraged by a penchant for benchmark dates that capture moments of supposed significance in the development of the international. Benchmarks are necessarily short-term episodes, turbulent, finite moments in time–space that are deemed significant by the scholar-narrator. With the global-historical pool of possible events so vast that one risks "going bonkers" (Gaddis 2002: 29), selecting the most relevant cases is always necessary. However, selectivity is a necessarily normative endeavor (Buzan and Lawson 2014: 438) and therefore is a process steeped in global knowledge production power relations. In scholarship on the "international," the "Big Bang" dates of 1648 and 1919 are commonly selected benchmarks (De Carvalho, Leira, and Hobson 2011), although a slightly broader range of benchmarks since 1500 is also evident (Buzan and Lawson 2014; Powel 2020). Benchmarks are seen as "necessary to theory-building" because "IR theories mostly centre on differentiating continuity from change" and "the process of making such a differentiation rests on the significance of transformation points (i.e. benchmark dates) *by necessity*" (Buzan and Lawson 2014: 446, original emphasis). They therefore serve as temporal bookends to the frames of analysis; moments after which the global somehow differs, but always as steps toward the present. Yet, by "bookending," they also condition inquiry by determining *what*, *where*, and *when* is of relevance.

For instance, beginning one's narrative or inquiry of the international with 1492 and the incorporation of the Americas into the world system involves excluding histories before European expansion and imperialism. Those omitted include non-European empires before, and even contemporaneous with, European expansion that, in their governance and relations with others, offer alternative ways of doing to those employed by European powers (e.g. Burbank and Cooper 2010; Zarakol 2022). The exclusion of such non-European empires also obscures the reality that empires have been a prominent feature of global history for millennia. It also venerates an elite-driven event to the neglect of more mundane pre-existing European footholds in the Americas in the form of Basque fishing settlements (see Linklater 2014: 3) or Viking trading posts: the "discovery" of the Americas by a royally funded expedition that was central to intra-European monarchical competition rather than a more organic, bottom-up narrative of contact between global hemispheres. Indeed, global integration did not suddenly happen around 1500 but rather gradually and at different points in different places. One reading might be that the Americas joined the "world system" in the sixteenth century; Indonesia in the seventeenth; India in the eighteenth; and China and Africa during the nineteenth century (Green 1992: 52). Alternatively, Europeans can be seen as latecomers to a millennia-old network connecting peoples from southern East Africa, the Indian Ocean,

and the Indonesian archipelago to the northern Siberian coast (Darwin 2008: 11–12; also see Abu-Lughod 1989).

Narratives that begin at the time of European expansion deny their audiences glimpses of non-Western ways of doing and thinking, often only including the non-Western after the moment of contact with the West (Mignolo 2007: 484). Nevertheless, so many of the discipline's English-language textbooks begin their historical narrative of the "international" with European expansion during the 1400–1500 period, or with the 1648 Peace of Westphalia or with the end of the Second World War in 1945 (Powel 2020: 968). Hence, Eurocentrism and tempo-centrism are two sides of the same narrow-minded coin, constraining both spatial and temporal dimensions of inquiry. As Hobson (2007: 417) observes, "Eurocentrism presents a tempocentric narrative of world history—one of Western supremacy written backwards." Challenging this narrative would involve a self-reflexive appreciation of how we arrive at our cases studies and concepts (Owens 2016). In at least the Anglosphere, however, it is according to such parochial narratives that new students are initiated to the international–political– sociological scholarly fraternity via their university disciplinary education. Crucially, these students become the theorists, practitioners, and educators of tomorrow, feeding a self-perpetuating cycle of Eurocentric and tempo-centric myopia that has long stifled global political-sociological knowledge (Powel 2020).

Social scientific studies of historical relations between peoples often rely on historians' analysis of primary sources. Yet, the emergence of modern historical writing in the West was concurrent with the late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century growth of Euro-American nationalism (see Hunt 2014: 2–7; Maza 2017: 45–82; Smail 2008: 26–27); a process that was also inextricably linked to imperialism and the consolidation of the nation-state as the pre-eminent unit of world politics. This "symbiotic" relationship between disciplinary history and nation-state-building was focused on generating national narratives around which populations could coalesce (Hunt 2014: 3). Previous interest in "universal" or "general" histories of humanity were set aside for narratives that explained the birth of particular nation-states (Smail 2008: 27). Nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western professional historical scholarship was predominantly concerned with "big men" and events that were central to national foundational narratives (Maza 2017: 10–13, 160). This was especially true in the historical curricula of the new mass education systems. These fed common narratives of national origins to populations whilst private schools simultaneously trained (male) elites in Greek and Roman histories and oratory as a means of cultivating appropriate leaders. In such quintessentially presentist and evental historiography, Maza (2017: 160) identifies three types of event: the symbolic (such as the battles or the martyrdom of prominent individuals); the "traumatic and transformative" (such as revolutions, wars, anti-colonial struggles); and the slightly longer in duration that are, nevertheless, narrated as singular events (such as the white settlement of the North American western frontier).

Whilst such national-historical narratives sometimes span centuries or millennia (consider pre-1945 Germany's stress on the Teutoburg Forest and Arminius), it is the emphasis on the event or individuals that is crucial. Events are portrayed as transformative, marking a definitive change from one era to another. Conversely, such narratives often neglect the ongoing and mundane flows of life, including micro changes therein and their cumulative macro effects. Indeed, when reflecting on the social sciences, Braudel (1980: 28) observed that they have been enthralled by the "horror of the event," with the past seemingly consisting only of a "mass of diverse facts." Yet, "this mass does not make up all of reality, all the depth of history on which scientific thought is free to work." Understanding why things happen requires a much more comprehensive grasp of the past, argued Braudel. His words acquire more urgency if we also seek to break from the exclusivist nationalism that underlies such eventism in some historiography. Political history is especially partial to "great events" and "facts," to the extent that some see it as having a tempo all of its own, distinct from the tempos of other aspects of the world such as economics, technological change, or culture (Evans 1997: 153–154). The penchant for "benchmark dates" in IR is a good example. The analytical challenge for International Political Sociology (IPS), therefore, is to supersede understanding events as isolated, short-term moments by historicizing them within the longer flows of a much deeper historical imagination.

Braudel and the *Annales* school of twentieth-century historians to which he belonged were instrumental in making historical analysis more open to interplays between multiple temporal frames and spaces. Braudel argued that multiple layers of time are always at work: any given moment, unit, people, or individual involves an "orchestra of particular histories" coming together (Braudel 1980: 178). History happens not because of single reason but due to multitudes of factors of different lengths in duration. He proposed a three-layered understanding of time to encourage the visualization of "a series of overlapping histories, developing simultaneously" (Braudel 1995b: 892). The first and fastest-moving layer is that of political events, including battles, treaties, and political changes. This, for Braudel, is the domain of "traditional" Western historical scholarship, preoccupied with "the headlong, dramatic, breathless rush of its narrative" (1980: 27). Next come the slower, cyclical changes of social and economic trends, roughly one to five decades long. These include technological shifts (and their utilitarian maturity) and changes to social structures. Finally, the most slow-moving of all layers of time is the *longue durée*, linked to natural conditions and "geographical" time. This involves the decomposition of centuries-old mentalities alongside the evolution of new ones. Elsewhere, Braudel (1995a: 21) summarizes the three layers, slowest to fastest, as "geographical time, social time, and individual time."

Yet, a cynicism of the event often trumps Braudel's "orchestral" thinking. Whilst his *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1995a, 1995b) is presented as a work of "total history" (1995b: 1238), it concludes by claiming that "the long run always wins in the end" (1995b: 1244) and Braudel describing himself as

a "structuralist" by temperament and "little tempted by the event." Events are mere "surface disturbances, crests of foam that the tides of history carry on their strong backs" (1995a: 21).

Unsurprisingly, some have rejected his dismissal of the event as significant in social change. Furet (1984: 60), Braudel's contemporary, shared some skepticism of events, arguing that if considered in isolation, events are "unintelligible," "meaningless" unless they are "integrated into a pattern of other events" (1984: 55). Furet proposed events be clearly located on an "axis of narrative, that is, the axis of time" (1984: 55), thereby awarding events significance through their contextualization within broader swathes of time. For others, time is uneven in the sense that it may sometimes seem to move very quickly, whilst at others it seems frozen (Evans 1997: 154). Spruyt's (1996) study of alternatives to the state in the European late Middle Ages combines Braudel's three-layered approach with Gould's (1989) rearticulation of Darwin's evolutionary theory. Gould challenges Darwin's understanding of the pace of evolution, rejecting both "ladder" interpretations of change as being a linear progression along steps and "cone" interpretations wherein evolution is a continual process of diversification and complexification. Instead, Gould argues, we should be open to the notion of "punctuated equilibrium" wherein periods of relative stability can be dramatically interrupted by sudden change. Sewell, inspired by Gould and intrigued by the interplay of multiple levels, finds that historical time is "lumpy, uneven, unpredictable, discontinuous," with slower threads being accelerated by events such as revolutions and wars (Sewell 2005: 9, 112).

Salvaging Braudel's orchestral vision is perhaps the best way to accommodate this unevenness. Indeed, others also recognize the need for openness to multiple overlapping temporalities. Stone (2017: 9–10) thought in terms of three layers of time simultaneously at work when considering the English "revolution" of the seventeenth century. First, there were the macro-level "preconditions" of social and economic changes over the preceding century that make the revolution *possible*. Second, "precipitants" during the preceding decade, such as a reactionary uncompromising elite, made it *probable*. Third, there were "trigger" short-term events of the immediately preceding years, including decisions, personalities, and provocative policies. Thus, causal significance is awarded to the combination of different layers rather than any single event. By extension, one might, find *some* of the same crucial conditions or "immediate, incidental factors" in other settings, yet without a resulting revolution/outcome due to the absence of precisely the same multilayered combination. Archaeologist Hodder (2014) speaks of causally significant "entanglements" of humans and "things," internal and external, subject and object across vast swathes of time. Corfi eld (2007: xv) noted that "every short-term moment contributes to a much longer term," and every event occurs diachronically, that is during or through time over a protracted span of time. Similarly, "long-term frameworks always inform the passing moment as

well," with history evident in the social world across three "dimensions" of history: continuity, gradual change, and rapid or revolutionary change.

Therefore, not only the attribution of significance to particular events but also the choice of temporal scale is a normative process (see Conrad 2016: 156). Social scientific and historical scholarship mistakenly prioritizes the "synchronic-then-and-there (events in one location) over the diachronic flow (whether deep continuities or long-term trends)" (Corfield 2019: 271). Indeed, appreciating the interplay of multiple layers of time is also an ethical, decolonizing imperative. Mbembe (2001: 6) observes that the predominant instrumentalist analytical paradigm in Western academia is "too reductionist to throw intelligible light on fundamental problems touching on the nature of social reality in Africa." Largely devoid of *longue durée* perspectives, the Western academy struggles to comprehend a post-colonial world that "encloses multiple *durées* made up of discontinuities, reversals, inertias, and swings that overlay one another: an entanglement" (Mbembe 2001: 14–15). It is even too simplistic to think according to a "before" and "after" colonization, as every age "is in reality a combination of several temporalities." The solution, therefore, might be something like an "eventful international political sociology" based on Sewell's "eventful sociology." Here, multiple layers of time are at work at any given moment, with the event itself significant both for its potential to transform structures and as demonstrating the "different [temporal] registers of causation" at work (Sewell 2005: 110–111). For this to be possible, however, scholarship of the international political social needs to overcome another hurdle: the poverty of its understanding of the deeper past. It is to this that the chapter now turns.

Delving the depths of time

Scholarship on historical IR has recently flourished, including on more diverse settings in time–space. Crucially, many works demonstrate that there have been several possible alternatives to the organization of global politics around state systems. For example, Spruyt (1996) demonstrates that there was nothing inevitable about the rise of the state system as the dominant form of IR in Europe. Teschke (2003) challenges the assumed significance of the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia in IR theories by highlighting the influence of pre-capitalist class and property relations on both domestic and international relations. Zarakol (2022) encourages a rethinking of past world orders "before the West" by exploring Chinggisid notions of sovereignty derived from the Mongol Empire. Phillips and Sharman (2015) argue that the Indian Ocean between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries demonstrates how multi-actor relations in a particular region should not be simply understood as a system of interacting states. Rather, it was the diversity in actor types within the region that shaped inter-actor relations and, consequently, scholars need to be open to the heterogeneity of global socio-political actors rather than

be constrained by a focus on a single type. Intriguingly, this is also a region wherein European actors were not just post-Westphalian states. Neumann and Wigen (2018), with the Eurasian steppe as their spatial focus, have made similar advances to understandings of actorness in global politics with a study that considers relations over a 6,000-year span of human history.

Two common threads run through these examples. First, greater historical awareness, especially of non-Western pasts, undermines conventional narratives of the international–political–social and the nature of agents within it. Little surprise, therefore, that Acharya (2014: 649) emphasized a broader understanding of world history, "not just Greco-Roman, European, or US history" as essential for a more inclusive "Global IR" in his presidential address to the International Studies Association. Second, despite their different temporal foci, they all demonstrate the relevance of deeper pasts to the political and social relations of the present, with analyses spanning centuries or even millennia.

Yet, if criticisms of IR's tempocentrism and Eurocentrism demonstrate problems with *how* scholarship treats the past, it also noteworthy that *any* consideration of the deeper past is very rare in IR, the wider social sciences, and disciplinary history (see Guldi and Armitage 2014: 50, 59–60, 87; Souvatzi, Baysal, and Baysal 2019, 2–4). Some notable exceptions are found in a predominantly realist engagement with Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War (e.g. Bagby 1994; Kagan 1997; for critiques, see Lawson 2012; Welch 2003). Other, bolder realists have explored multiple ancient cases to compile wide trans-historical studies of balance of power (Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth 2007) or as part of multidisciplinary analysis of early statecraft (various in Cohen and Westbrook 2000; Podany 2010). Among such works are claims of the origins of the "international," such as Cohen and Westbrook's (2000: 4) contention that the Amarna system of the mid-fourteenth century bce was the "first international system." Despite remaining firmly grounded in realism's state- and elite-centric world view, such works helpfully broaden scholarship on the "international" of the deeper past beyond classical Greece in both temporal and spatial terms. These offer glimpses of second millennium bce diplomatic relations between Egyptian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean sovereigns (Cohen and Westbrook 2000; Podany 2010), along with the international(s) of first millennium bce Middle Eastern, Indian, and Chinese systems (Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth, 2007).

World-systems scholarship has also been open to the deeper past. Frank and Gills's (1993, 2000) investigations of a 5,000-year-old world-system are broad in both temporal and geographical outlook. They detect an ancient world-system involving "southern Central Asia, the Harappan civilization in the Indus valley, the Persian and Anatolian plateaus, Mesopotamia between them, and Egypt" (Frank and Gills 1993: 153) that desperately needs further investigation. Many "world-systems" can exist simultaneously (Wallerstein 1974: 15), even coming into contact with each other over time and converging (e.g. Denemark et al. 2000). Gills and Frank's claims are

reinforced by Denemark, Friedman, Gills, and Modelski's edited overview (2000) of long-term world-systems evolution. Contributions consider the emergence and decline of state-like hegemonies within systems structured around core/periphery dichotomies and, like Wallerstein's pioneering earlier work (1974), are important for recognizing causal links between the whole (world) and its constituent (local) parts over long timespans. World-systems scholarship thus appreciates that both local and global shared the same causalities (on Wallerstein, see Sewell 2005: 85–87), contradicting those who insist on distinctive causalities for each level (e.g. Waltz 1979, 2001). Yet, despite its promise in terms of temporal and geographical scope, a world-systems approach is circumscribed by its insistence that the global determines behavior at the local. World-systemic relations eclipse individual and local community agency, with the key to understanding the history of any given location being not the history of the location itself but rather the division of labor at a world-systemic level (see Sewell 2005: 86). Throughout history, therefore, the local is always determined by the global.

Further contributions have emerged from the international society or "English School" approach, notably the works by Watson (1992) and Buzan and Little (2000) on international society and systems, respectively. Each provides millennia-spanning explorations of international systems that begin earlier than the realists, identifying a first "international" in third-millennium bce Sumer in southern Mesopotamia. Watson (1992: 13) aimed "to see what we can discern about the organization of relations between different peoples in other civilizations." Watson and Buzan and Little broaden the realist discussion from states and power to systems, displaying greater openness toward possible units of analysis than the realists. Moreover, Watson (1992: 13) noted the "considerable range of distinct individual phenomena" captured by "broad categorizations" such as "state," "empire," and "system." Frustratingly, as with much international society scholarship, states and empires remain the pre-eminent empirical examples and units of analysis throughout the work, notwithstanding sporadic mentions and conceptual consideration of "communities" (e.g. Watson 1992: 311, 319). There is a further preference for literate populations, with the emergence of writing and the survival of textual records specifically leading Watson (1992: 24) to select Sumer as his first example of an "international society."

Buzan and Little aim to challenge tempocentric ahistoricism, Eurocentrism, "anarchophilia" (the ability to see only anarchical world orders), and state-centrism. By exploring snippets of world history since "hunter-gatherer bands" (HGBs) in a "pre-international," they demonstrate the possibility of "international" relations before the "rise of the West" and outside the West. Notably, they suggest a moment of conception for the "international" that is contingent upon three evolutions in social organization: sedentism, followed by social hierarchy and differentiation (Buzan and Little 2000: 135). Unlike Watson's emphasis on writing, they stress the significance of urbanism and the hierarchical impact it had on socio-political relations. It was not until the first city-states that humanity developed socio-political units that were "sufficiently hierarchical

in their internal organisation to generate 'inside' and 'outside' political realms" (Buzan and Little 2000: 163). City-state emergence is an observable transition point from the "pre-international" to the "international" (2000: 134). City-states were "more specifically military-political" than previous units and therefore better able to endure the rigors of an "international system" (2000: 167), with empires sharing these features with states (2000: 169). Because of their military, economic, and political-diplomatic capabilities, city-state emergence thus denotes the arrival of the "full range of nested actors" that is necessary for a "full international system" (2000: 95–96). Indeed, "fully-fledged international systems … began with the rise of city-states" (2000: 109), and the transition from a "pre-international" period populated by HGBs, "tribes," and "chiefdoms" to an "international" of states (and, later, empires) was complete. Thus, we are given three points of reference for the first "international": unit of analysis (the "what," i.e. the state); space (the "where," i.e. Sumer); and time (the "when," i.e. third-millennium bce).

Troubling typologies

This typological transition model contains a perennial tension for analysts between empirical specificity and the conceptual generalization necessary for theorization. Buzan and Little present a four-point evolutionary model of transition to their (city-)state-centered international: empires and states supersede (supposedly) kinship-based "tribes" (sedentary or nomadic) and "chiefdoms" that, in turn, supersede primordial HGBs. Thus, humanity is reduced to four socio-political types, with states and empires posited as apex forms. Pre-state unit typologies are differentiated by the assumed egalitarian internal power structure, with a shift to more hierarchical structures with the advent of "chiefdoms" (Buzan and Little 2000: 138). Buzan and Little recognize that their terminology "mask[s] an enormous amount of variation" within each ideal-type (2000: 113, 161), with categorization of cases justifiable to "tell the story of the pre-international in a coherent fashion." Importantly, one should also not read "an overly determined story of evolution leading from one to the other and eventually to states and international systems": not all HGBs become "tribes," just as not all "tribes" become "chiefdoms" or "chiefdoms' states." Yet, despite such caveats, it is the conceptual transition to statehood in the eyes of the *analyst* that such thinking postulates as marking the international's emergence.

Such evolutionary models draw on a long, if contentious, interdisciplinary tradition of awarding significance to typological transition. Although Buzan and Little do not cite Service (1975), the latter also proposed a band–tribe–chiefdom–state model of development many decades ago. Service (1975: 3) claimed that the chiefdom-to-state transition marked the "great divide" in the "evolution of human culture … when primitive society became civilized society." Service (1975: 3–4) believed that

> primitive societies were segmented into kin groups that were egalitarian in their relations to each other. Eventually some of them became hierarchical, controlled and directed by a central authoritative power—a power instituted as government. Clearly, these societies were tremendously changed by the advent of this new stage in cultural evolution.

However, many have since noted the colonial, often racist origins of Service's work, alongside those of fellow "neo-evolutionists" Leslie White and Julian Steward (Crumley 1995: 3–4; Pluciennik 2005; Yoffee 2005: 13). These neo-evolutionists built on nineteenth-century anthropological efforts to classify populations across the globe according to imagined forms of socio-political organization, such as Lewis Henry Morgan's seven "ethnical stages" (1877: 9–19, cited in Pluciennik 2005: 54). The category "tribe" is particularly controversial "because of certainly pejorative, if not outright racist, implications" in addition to a lack of archaeological evidence to justify such ideal-types (Porter 2012: 44; see also Ekeh 1990; Lentz 1995; Southall 1970). For instance, the difference between "tribal" pastoralists from the Eurasian steppe and the mobile populations of the Zagros mountains of southwest Asia are erased by their common classification as "tribes" (Alizadeh 2010: 354). Indeed, "[tribe] was so fundamental to colonialist discourse as the devaluing of 'the other' that it [cannot] be used as an academic designation without perpetuating this practice" (Porter 2012: 44).

Criticism has also been aimed at assumptions of significance around the transition from "kinship-based polities," such as "tribes" or "chiefdoms," to "states." Porter's (2012: 326–329) volume on mobile pastoralism in southwest Asia demands the abandonment of the archaic and discriminatory epistemological frameworks of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including moving "beyond 'tribes' and 'states' " as categories. Sumer is central to her empirical focus, just as it has been to several works on the "international," although her conclusions, based on years of empirical archaeological and cuneiform-textual research, paint a more complex and diverse picture of the politics of the region to that found in IR. Indeed, neither the Sumerian nor Akkadian language had a word for "state," employing instead the term for "settlement" regardless of its size (Sumerian: *ur*; Akkadian: *alum*: Emberling 2003: 260–261). Any schema that seeks to compare societies according to evolutionary "stages" risks being associated with colonial-racist ways of knowing as their classification efforts determine which periods, units, and actors in the past are more worthy of knowing. For example, Segal (2000: 789) notes that much historical scholarship associates the state and its emergence with "civilization." "Barbarism," "savagery," and "uncivilized," by contrast, are those states of existence not only *before* but also *outside* the state. Notably, Buzan and Little label nomadic groups as "barbarians" in the title of the chapter in which such peoples receive attention in their volume (Buzan and Little 2000: ch. 7).

Evolutionary models also conflate unit type with temporality, with a polity's location in time defined by the typological category applied to its political organization and

institutions rather than by calendrical measures. Time consequently becomes hierarchical-typological rather than chronological, determined by a population's categorization by an analyst (Souvatzi, Baysal, and Baysal 2019: 9). Thus, two polities contemporary in time can be contrastingly defined as *civilized* and *uncivilized* depending on whether or not they possess a "state." Even polities in the present without a recognizable "state" in the analyst's eyes are proposed as exemplars of pre-civilizational peoples (Segal 2000: 790). This is encouraged by what Gould (1989) calls the "iconography of an expectation" of evolutionary studies: the developmental "tree" diagrams favored by neo-evolutionists that denude cultures of their historical contexts (Ingold 2016: 107–122; Yoffee 2005: 13, 18–19). Modernity is the "hidden grand narrative" of such schema, regardless of their actual location in chronological time (after Gamble 2014: 152). For those who believe that the "international" begins with the emergence of the state, modernity *is* the "state," with its development being the demarcation line between "international" and "pre-international," "state" and "barbarian," worthy or unworthy of study.

In practice, entire disciplines are shaped according to perceived evolutionary "stages." Disciplinary history's traditional rejection of nonwritten sources and nonliterate populations is a prime example as it has sought to distinguish itself from "pre-history"; during the late nineteenth century, few historians made any serious efforts to explore humanity's deeper past (Segal 2000: 774–775). The same observation can be made of twenty-first-century IR scholarship. Braudel (1980: 35) expressed similar reservations about other disciplines, noting, in 1958, that the economists of his time only looked as far back as 1945. There are particular problems with the notion of a "pre-period," as in "pre-history," "pre-state," or "pre-international." As Smail and Shryock (2013: 711) note, "the 'pre' is a shadow cast by modern things, a space of simplified contrasts that is noticeable yet encourages inattention." It is "the domain of tradition, nature, stasis, childhood, rawness, simplicity, enchantment and superstition" (Smail and Shryock 2013: 713); a past "Other" as a foil to the wonder of the present self. This problem has been reinforced in anthropology by a methodological reliance on ethnographic studies of "our contemporary ancestors" in the forms of modern "tribal" peoples. Neo-evolutionists "channelled archaeological research into dangerous waters" by portraying modern societies that had not "achieved 'statehood' as 'fossils', the relics of prehistoric underachievement" (Yoffee 2005: 18–19). Awareness of time, especially deep time, and socio-political unit typologies are intertwined.

From state to polity

Being open to the past before the "rise of the West" is also to be open to alternative ways of conducting relations involving a multiplicity of socio-political forms. Indeed, "international,", "society," and "state" are merely symbolic representations of reality; a

reduction of diverse forms of power across a "myriad of different fields" to a specific range of "levels" and, consequently, a decrease in "the complexity of the scales at work as well as the dynamics of passage between them" (Bigo 2016: 26). The challenge for the scholar seeking to historicize the global is therefore two-fold: first, to encourage more progressive alternative ontologies that allow for the generalization necessary for effective theory-building without the racist tendencies of previous efforts; second, to develop the interdisciplinary historical-empirical awareness needed to appreciate the diversity and complexity of social scale and form that constitute global socio-political relations at a given point in time–space. Rethinking existing typologies is central to both aspects.

Some suggestions as to avenues of progress already exist. For instance, Yoffee argues in his work on the "archaic state" that the term "state" remains useful, albeit in a more elasticated form. Recognizing that "state" is a changeable historical entity, Yoffee (2005: 15–17) suggests a "Nietzschean" approach of declining to define it in absolute terms. He simply employs the term to signify territorial "political centres" that could mediate in disputes between groups, generate and maintain "symbols of society,", and organize the defense and expansion of a society. Thus, "state" may be used transhistorically but is decoupled from Weberian territoriality and Western ideals of sovereignty. Alternatively, Ferguson and Mansbach (1996) proposed "polities," based on empirical studies that also include the Sumerians. They remind us that a longer view of human history demonstrates that multi-ethnic imperial polities predominate over the millennia, and that "most human beings were aggregated and governed by empires, extended families and clans, and nomadic tribal groups" (Ferguson and Mansbach 2008: 367).

"Polities" also allow us to appreciate the overlapping of socio-political groups. Ferguson and Mansbach build on Mann, who argues that "human beings do not create unitary societies but a diversity of intersecting networks of social interaction" (Mann 2012: 16). These exist through and beyond individual societies, overlapping with other networks inside and outside a given society. Indeed, Mann questions the utility of the term "society" as it implies a unitary social totality that is impossible to achieve. "Human beings," Mann (2012: 14) contends, "need to enter into social power relations, but they do not enter social totalities. They are social, but not societal, animals." For Mann (2012: 1), the social world is one of "multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks of power," and "we can never find a single bounded society in geographical or social space." This offers much potential when historicizing the global political-social as it allows for change and continuity *and* is open to forms of polity beyond the state in its Weberian form.

"Polities" are also entirely compatible with perhaps Buzan and Little's most significant insight: that units "have always been dependent … on participation in a wider social system for their survival" (Buzan and Little 2000: 157). This appreciation of the constitutive force of interaction is cited in Rosenberg's (2010, 2016) recognition

of political multiplicity, with Sumer again the earliest "society" mentioned in two of his foundational works on multiplicity. Notably, Algaze, a leading archaeologist of early Mesopotamian cities, moved away from his early (and influential) world-systems perspective on Mesopotamian expansion toward a more nuanced, social complexity-inspired position (Algaze 1993). In his later work, Algaze (1993: 143) argued that "processes of social evolution are always the result of both regional and transregional patterns of interaction." Such interaction necessarily involves a multiplicity of actors; multiple in both number and type. Rosenberg (2010: 185) concludes that "the existence of these early states is likely to stimulate reactive developments of social differentiation and proto-state formation beyond themselves, leading to the emergence of further 'political entities'."

Indeed, there is growing evidence of complex hierarchical political organization among pastoralist and/or mobile peoples. Honeychurch (2014) contends that "nomadic states" have existed that possess many attributes of territorial states, albeit distributed over unfamiliar spatial and temporal scales to analysts more accustomed to Weberian-Western "states." Alizadeh (2010: 354) reveals that the Elamite state of southwestern and south-central Iran practiced an "enclosing nomadism" wherein sedentary farming communities were "enclosed within the much larger sphere of the nomadic society and ruled by a hierarchy that was drawn from various highland [peoples]." Notably, the Elamite "state" survived in some form for around three millennia, much longer than its Mesopotamian neighbors. This is an inversion of the "enclosed nomadism" that supported agrarian urban polities in contemporary neighboring Mesopotamia. Thus, urban hegemony over the pastoral was not universal, and alternative forms of socio-political organization were possible, durable, and successful in the very region that many identify with the birth of the territorial state and the international. By doing so, the Elamites mitigated the very different geographical-ecological conditions of the mountains compared to low-lying Mesopotamia and the central Iranian plateau to the northeast. They demonstrate humanity's socio-political versatility and adaptability, along with the resilience that comes with versatility. Yet, they remain firmly engaged in the relations of the broader region, contributing to the Rosenbergian dialectical "multiplicity" which constitutes the "international" of early southwest Asia that includes the Sumerian cities, but also outlasting them. Such alternatives are, however, only visible if one is first open to a global field of relations across time–space and, given IR's relative poverty on the deeper past, to interdisciplinary perspectives.

Conclusion

Tempocentrism draws our gaze to what resembles our own present at the expense of the past's more unfamiliar—but potentially instructive—diversity. Caged by typological evolutionary ladders, we are denied glimpses of what might be possible, limiting our

future(s) by restricting our grasp of our pasts. Historicizing the "global," therefore, entails more than simply looking to the past. It is to recognize history as a smorgasbord of relations, experiences, practices, and forms of political organization. Once one's gaze is pulled away from the apparently familiar "states," ' it is easier to appreciate the diversity of responses by varied polities to the challenges of relations with other polities and also, as in the cases of steppe peoples or the Elamites, to the geological-ecosystemic settings in which humanity has flourished. Indeed, the multiplicity of actors active in the "international" at a particular point in time–space always involves polities structured differently to a Weberian-Western understanding of the state. Therefore, appreciating that relations were instrumental to the emergence of the first Sumerian "city-states" (if that is what they were) must also involve appreciating that nonstates were also integral parts of that "relational setting" (Somers 1994: 72). Moreover, events, such as the emergence of the first states, are always caused by combinations of factors from multiple different layers in the past. Global challenges such as climate change demonstrate the imperative to broaden our ontologies beyond the state, beyond the West, and beyond the recent past. A more decentered, historicized *global* political sociology—one that is less wedded to the state, the present, evental history, and the West's experience of the world—should be ideally positioned to accompany other disciplines' pushing at the temporal and spatial borders of their inquiries.

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CHAPTER 17

HISTORICAL INTERNATIONAL ORDERS

HENDRIK SPRUYT

Introduction: Historicizing the study of international orders

As Tarak Barkawi, Duncan Bell, and Ayşe Zarakol argue in their introductory chapter to this section, International Relations (IR) scholarship, certainly in the United States, has often failed to recognize the role of historically contingent processes. This has had several negative consequences, not least in its tendency to view the contemporary pattern of inter-state relations, based on the Westphalian state system, as typical of inter-polity relations across history and across regions. To use a biological metaphor, the entire genus or family of international orders is represented by the specific European species of international order. The Westphalian system is taken as the archetype; variations in international orders are reduced to different distributions of power.[1] Additionally, IR is depicted as a set of mechanical relations, rather than social processes.[2] Actors are viewed as billiard balls interacting with each other in kinetic fashion. States are propelled by material forces, modeled as the relative balance of power.[3]

This ahistoricist scholarship fails on a number of grounds. In reality, all international orders are also social systems (Dunne 1998). Consequently, actors are driven not only by material factors but also by their interpretation and understanding of such factors. Brute facts must be distinguished from social facts, with the latter crucial in explaining behavior (Searle 2006; 15).

As I will argue, to understand international orders, one must focus on the specific collective understanding of what the international order ontologically *is* and what it normatively *should be*.

As Barkawi, Bell, and Zarakol cogently demonstrate in the opening chapter to this section, historicism can be understood in many ways. For some, historicism need not require the study of historical events but rather involves the philosophical reflection of what history and the study of history entails. However, this is not the approach taken here. Instead, I follow Hobson and Lawson (2008: 427), who argue that the study of IR

is inevitably empirical and must focus on historical events, what they describe as "historicist historical sociology."

I start by discussing how a particular view of historical study has permeated much of IR, particularly in the neo-realist and neoliberal perspectives. While the sources of this bias are complex, I highlight the role of the modern scientific mentality and particularly the influence of Newtonian ideas in systems theorizing. In the next section, I argue that this positivist view has led to a mechanical reduction of orders to the number of great powers and the relative distribution of power among them. This has led to flawed explanations and unsustainable predictions. By contrast, a historical-contextualist approach provides a more persuasive account of how diverse polities interacted with each other and how they understood the larger milieu of which they were part. While being partial to the Cambridge School of interpretation, of which Quentin Skinner (1978, 1985) is a prominent example, I also wish to emphasize the value of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1958, 1965) and Hans Gadamer (2013) in grounding this type of analysis.

The historicist approach I advocate is focused on historical events; that is, it is not focused on philosophical reflection of history alone. It is contextualist and interpretive, recognizing the role of structural conditions as well as agency and contingency (see Hobson and Lawson 2008: 429). Contrary to how traditional historians tend to study events, and contrary to radical critical history, it attempts to develop causal narratives without claiming they have nomothetic status. Finally, such a historicist perspective is reflexive and questions the bases of one's own views and theoretical perspectives, and in so doing, it aims to shift our horizons. More specifically, I submit that a turn to global history (Bentley 1996) and the application of insights of the French Annales school can be fruitful (also see Powel, this volume). After stating the case for those approaches, I provide an example of some non-European international orders that operated on dramatically different bases to the European state system that emerged with modernity.

In sum, this chapter presents an alternative approach to how international orders should be studied and understood. Besides providing a methodological justification for this historical-sociological approach, I discuss various international orders that existed coterminous with the Westphalian state system and encountered the European states as the latter expanded their global reach.

Sources of epistemological and ontological biases in the study of IR

The decline of the feudal order in Europe precipitated a novel logic of structuring inter-polity relations. Beyond Europe, polities that frequently interacted with one another usually transformed into some form of formal or informal hierarchy. Empires defined themselves as universalist in claiming authority without spatial limits, even if in reality this authority was limited by rival claimants (Spruyt 2013; Unger 1987); that is,

authority legitimated itself by claiming dominion over all, while in practice, rulers had to recognize other polities as imposing limits to their reach. Chinese emperors ruled by the mandate of heaven (Kang 2010). Rulers in the Islamic world claimed to be world conquerors (Bang and Kolodziejczyk 2012). In South and Southeast Asia, potentates asserted to be *chakravartin*, the universal ruler, the perfect and spiritually endowed king (Tambiah 1976). Likewise, for a long period of European history international order was equated with hierarchy. Thus, political leaders invoked the image of the Roman Empire for two millennia, with the Holy Roman Empire only extinguished by 1806. In this image, polities were to be unified as an empire and as a Christian Commonwealth.

The failure of the imperial and theocratic project led to the emergence of distinct political entities in Europe (Osiander 1994; Spruyt 1994; Tilly 1990). Conceptual innovations building on Roman law, the emergence of individuality, and the differentiation of public and private authority (Kantorowicz 1957) led to a revolutionary restructuring of authority. Authority would be spatially defined and territorially limited, stretching to the border but no further. Within these spatial parameters, authority was sovereign and juridically autonomous, without any higher authority beyond the borders (Hinsley 1986). These principles evolved over centuries and predated the Westphalian peace agreements of 1648, but they were not fully adopted until well after those accords. However, the German location where the accords were signed became eponymous with the system of sovereign, territorial states that gradually emerged from then on.

This lack of overarching authority raised the problem of how to structure the interactions between the European polities. To be precise, how should order be understood in a system of discrete interacting elements?

It is no accident that the Westphalian system coincided with a renaissance in scientific innovation. The advances in classical mechanics and astronomy pioneered by Kepler, Newton, and others influenced the understanding of how structure and order could emerge by the equation of forces (Butterfield 1966: 132; Ruggie 1998: 855; Watson 1992: 8). Indeed, the Newtonian revolution profoundly affected politics in general. For example, in England, the Anglican Church latched on to Newton's physics as a metaphor for how to control emotions (Jacob 1976: 18). As Bentley Allan has persuasively shown, cosmological understandings and their related discourse intersected in myriads of ways with international order-making (Allan 2018).

In Europe, the idea that states could interact with each other as independent polities, yet remain in a stable equilibrium gained traction with the concept of the balance of power—the careful equation of gravitational weight now transposed to the equation of material state power in terms of armed forces and economic capacity. Together with this mechanical understanding arose the perspective that politics could be understood scientifically. Stability could emerge by design rather than polities being subject to capricious cyclical history and divine providence.

In short, the Westphalian state system emerged against the canvas of a set of collective beliefs that emerged from the Renaissance and which were deeply influenced by perspectives in the natural sciences. International order could be rationally designed and controlled.

It is fair to say that the temptation of the natural scientific perspective is still present in today's desire to understand politics on similar terms, as evinced by the term "political *science*" (Farr 1988). This desire has come to full fruition by adopting epistemological and methodological approaches that are typical for the natural sciences. While the logical positivist demand of strict verification has largely been abandoned, its modification by Popper (1979) and Lakatos (1978) has been widely adopted by political scientists (e.g. Keohane 1983). Social science should thus advance testable propositions that lend themselves to falsification and that cumulatively lead to ever-advancing knowledge (Hempel 1942). In this sense, one can regard a considerable body of the scholarship on international orders as positivist.

The poverty of ahistoricism: The balance of power as the basis of international order

Many contributors to this volume point to the flaws of a positivist, empiricist approach to IR. For the purposes of this chapter, it suffices to note the shortcomings of a positivist, mechanical perspective with regards to international order.

The balance of power is fundamental to such explanations of international order. Common in this perspective is the Newtonian understanding of mechanically interacting material forces, even if realist scholars of IR do not agree on the exact configuration of forces that leads to a balance. In these positivist debates, as Barkawi, Bell, and Zarakol point out in the lead chapter for this section, historical nuances are reduced to data points in order to provide generalizations. For structural realists, stability depended on equally opposing forces.[4] Waltz thus asserted that two-power systems are more stable than multipolar systems. For the more classically oriented realist Henry Kissinger (1957), multipolarity was preferable.

In another mechanical reading of history, stability rested not on the equality of forces but on the dominance of a single power that regulated the principles and conduct of IR. Robert Gilpin (1981) asserted that "hegemonic wars" erupted when the dominant power declined and the rising challenger sought to impose its preferred view of order (also see Copeland 2000). Even if Gilpin at times acknowledged the importance of social practices, his theory was quite compatible with long cycle theory. For the latter, hegemonic conflicts could be statistically modeled and correlated with material indicators of power (Goldstein 1988).[5]

Such theories can, in turn, generate policy prescriptions. The material growth of the People's Republic of China (PRC) has led some to conclude that war is inevitable (Me

arsheimer 2006). US policy should thus be oriented to stemming the development of the PRC while it still can. In such views, material forces form the basis of order and "history takes on the role of scripture" (Hobson and Lawson 2008: 423). In short, one still prevalent explanation of international order is premised on a mechanistic view of how polities interact: the balance of power, materially derived, forms the basis of international order and stability. Actions are the result of structural factors that expunge any sense of agency and choice.

This view is fundamentally flawed. It fails to recognize the historically contingent social interactions and choices that form the basis of order. For example, the theory cannot account for the absence of a hegemonic conflict between the United States and Great Britain, even though the former displaced the latter as the pre-eminent global actor. The shared objectives and preferences for a liberal global order play no part in mechanistic explanations because order is modeled as structure devoid of social content. A positivist approach erases the Anglo-American world's shared visions on race, civilization, and even utopian ideas of common citizenship that made a hegemonic war among the two states inconceivable (Bell 2020). In short, shared ideas, norms, and social practices are fundamental to any explanation of international order.

The foundations of contextualist historical study

The legacy of the early English School

The positivist turn, prominent in international studies in the United States, held less of a dominant position elsewhere. Scholars of the English School championed methods that were more common to the humanities and the study of history (Navari 2009). Hedley Bull's foundational work, *The Anarchical Society*, explicitly based its understanding of international order on "common interests and common values," as well as "a common set of rules … and common institutions" (Bull 1977: 13). For sure, Bull also spoke of the balance of power, but in his understanding, the balance arose from deliberate action and shared views of what constituted a balance in the first place (Bull 1977: 105–106). It was not an automatically emerging phenomenon generated by mechanical forces, neither could it be discerned by simple observation of material indicators. Social interactions and shared understandings lay at the basis of the European state system.

The English School's great contribution lay in emphasizing the historical study of social processes as the basis of international order. They thereby challenged the positivist approach by demonstrating the importance of agency and choice, and the need to understand these choices by interpretation. Whereas the positivist approach took its cue from physics and engineering, the English School found affinity with historical studies, sociology, and anthropology. To understand international orders, one must understand context and the motivation of actors.

An interpretive approach to understanding politics rejects the assumption that actors operate as utility calculators. As Marc Bloch famously argued, Economic Man is an illusion (Bloch 1953: 194–195). In more recent studies, political economists likewise have shown that individuals often do not know what is in their interest in the first place (Blyth 2002), or they act in ways that do not follow rationalist calculus. Social contexts, established repertoires, and psychological intuitions drive decisions, as cognitive scientists and behavioral economists have long shown (Tversky and Kahneman 1980).

Moreover, individuals as well as states operate within social contexts that influence individual preferences and choices. Individuals are driven by multiple motivations, often of a less tangible character (Lebow 2008). What actor A decides will be influenced by what B does, or what A thinks B is doing, and so on. Whereas positivist and empiricist approaches black-box identity, by making it static and assuming uniformity, the interpretive approach focuses on identity as mutually constitutive and variant (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001; Wendt 1999).

Interpretation and contingent relativism

Analyzing the content of shared collective beliefs is critical for understanding political phenomena, as suggested by Max Weber's oft-cited remark that ideas are like switchmen that determine the tracks along which interests are pursued. However, Weber is frequently misinterpreted as suggesting that ideas solely play an instrumental role in determining the means by which actors pursue given material interests (Gerth and Mills 1946: 63–64). A more persuasive reading of Weber suggests that ideas inform what actors see as material interests in the first place (Eastwood 2005).

The work of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1958, 1965) and Peter Winch (1990) can be considered as foundational for the interpretive approach (George and Campbell 1990: 272–280; Pitkin 1972). As Wittgenstein argued (1958, 1965), the meaning of words derives from the context in which they are used, contrary to the logical positivist view that words and concepts refer to specific empirical referents. Meaning depends on the particular language game and the manner in which utterances are deployed. Winch (1990) has applied this Wittgensteinian insight to the social sciences.

Thus, in order to understand a particular concept or practice, one must understand how that term is deployed and understood by the actors themselves. For example, when I say, "Your gift is too much," what is at stake? Do I really think it is too much and hope you take it back? Or do I wish to receive the gift and mean to convey my gratitude for your generosity? Conversely, perhaps I am being sarcastic, and I am making light of something I consider to be insignificant.

To give an example that pertains to international orders: If one individual pays tribute to another, does this mean that the donor recognizes the superiority of the recipient? That might very well be the case. However, it might also be a situation in which the donor in fact deploys the paying of tribute as a means of extortion. To demonstrate her

superiority, the recipient will have to reciprocate with a similar gift of equal or even greater value. The rituals of gift exchange and social norms come into play here. This dynamic operated, to some extent, in the tributary relations between the various "Chinese" dynasties (who, for the last millennium, often were not ethnic Han Chinese) and the northern "barbarian" empires, such as the Liao, Jin, and Mongol khanates. At face value, the tribute paid by these semi-nomadic empires might be depicted as submission to the Chinese emperor. And indeed, it was recorded as such in the Chinese bureaucratic annals. However, at other times, tribute constituted something closer to extortion. Thus, when the Oirat Mongols paid tribute to the Ming emperor, he in turn felt obligated to exceed the gifts to demonstrate his beneficence. The costs to the emperor were such that he had to request they stopped paying tribute (Barfield 1989: 240–247).

Practices, and the meaning of those practices, must thus be investigated by trying to understand the "life games" of which they are part. Lisa Wedeen (1998) presents a fine application of this insight in her study of authority relations in Syria. What should one derive from public displays of obeisance to the Syrian regime? A positivist observer might conclude that the regime can count on considerable public support. But Wedeen's research suggests that such displays were far from sincere and that the regime's legitimacy was contested. Delving deeper into the implications of the public display, however, would not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the regime was unstable. The very ability of the regime to demand such displays constituted a manifestation of its power to command, even if all (including the regime itself) knew these displays were insincere (Wedeen 1998).

Inevitably a contextualist-interpretive approach raises questions. Can one know that one has a "correct," or at least "superior," interpretation of the practices at hand? Does this mode of investigation doom one to relativism?

As in anthropology and historical studies, there is no guarantee that one's assessment provides for a "true and accurate" account. As Richard Rorty (1979) argues, the idea that theory provides a mirror or reality, a correspondence with an objectively given external "out there," is mistaken. Historical interpretation is inevitably contingent. Instead, one might proffer a plausible explanation of particular events by means of abductive reasoning, without asserting the primacy of any single causal variable (Poulio t 2007).

Interpretation of a distinct culture or of past historical practices is thus not meant to provide an "objective and correct" account. In realizing the epistemological impossibility of such an effort, the interpreter instead seeks to expand her own horizons. One does not, and cannot, leave one's own period and life experiences behind in the encounter. Instead, the encounter leads to a "fusion of horizons," illuminating elements of our own beliefs and ideas (Gadamer 2013: 171, 204). However, this recognition of what is only possible as contingent interpretation should not be construed as extreme relativism. As Winch (1964: 322) points out, the demands of consistency allow the observer to regard some interpretations as more plausible than others. Moreover, he

notes that all humans face shared "limiting conditions" that make comparisons possible. Even more tellingly, extreme relativism as a philosophical position would make any understanding across cultures or historical periods logically impossible from the start.

How should contextual historical study proceed?

As this Handbook argues, IR has started to explore the value of inter-disciplinary work across sociology, historical studies, and anthropology (Lawson and Shilliam 2010). To fully engage in this research, two dispositions are invaluable. First, research should self-consciously divest itself from the Eurocentric focus that has typified international studies of the past decades. Earlier work by Ferguson and Mansbach (1996) has already suggested the merits of such an approach. More recently, a burgeoning field of scholarship has demonstrated how the study of non-European polities and international orders can yield considerable insights.[6] As all these works demonstrate, mutually constitutive processes have been at work for centuries across the various civilizational complexes.

The global turn

The self-realization that international studies has been too Eurocentric is one of the major contributions of recent historical sociological analysis. An equally important contribution has come from the turn among historians to studying history as global history (Bentley 1996).

Despite its attention to history and interpretive approaches, the early English School was not without its flaws. Hedley Bull (1977) explicitly denied the presence of international societies beyond Europe. According to him, only a few other international societies, such as the Greek city-states and the Chinese Warring States period (*c*. 475–221 bce), had existed prior to the advent of the Westphalian state system. By his definition, an international society could only exist if the polities recognized each other's sovereignty. Since Bull argued that, outside of Europe, polities historically evolved into empires, or suzerain systems, this logically meant that no international societies could be present (Bull 1977: 10–11). In addition, Bull at times predicated his notion of international society uniquely on Western values, often speaking of the European system as a Christian society (Bull 1977: 16, 26, 34, 44).

Adam Watson admitted for more variation across history and space, but he too retained a Eurocentric focus. Thus, their joint *The Expansion of International Society* spoke of a unidirectional expansion of the Westphalian system, rather than acknowledging the bidirectional nature of the encounter of the West with the non-European world (Bull and Watson 1984).

Current scholarship has broken with the Eurocentric focus and turned explicitly to the study of polities and regions that differed from the Westphalian state system (Buzan and Goh 2020; Buzan and Lawson 2015; Buzan and Little 2010; Acharya 2012; Acharya and Buzan 2010; Suzuki 2009). Others have taken the early English School to task for downplaying the dyadic interactions between the European powers and the non-European world. Tellingly, Dunne and Reus-Smit titled their re-evaluation of this process, *The Globalization of International Society* (2017), thus omitting the bias in the term "expansion."

The current trend in the historical-sociological study of international orders evinces several shared characteristics and makes important contributions. First, in being explicitly historical, it acknowledges variation among different types of orders across time and space. By doing so, it shows how polities acted in ways that were not simply reducible to simple utility calculations. Second, it illuminates that previous theories that were held to be generally applicable are, in fact, not so. For example, the idea that frequent warfare leads to state centralization and development, based on the evaluation of developments in Europe, has proven unhelpful for many non-European areas (Lorge 2008; Spruyt 2017b). Third, it recognizes the interaction between different internal orders as a dyadic rather than unidirectional process. It thereby sheds new light on the development of Western modern identities and how European polities defined themselves in opposition to an imagined inferior Other (Anghie 2004; Bowden 2009; Neumann and Welsh 1991; Spruyt 2020).

Finally, this scholarship expands beyond the scholarship of states to include a multitude of other actors. In this vein, Philipps and Sharman (2015) take a broad regional approach in their work on the Indian Ocean and focus on a wide area of interaction. They displace the alleged primacy of European actors by demonstrating the limited influence of those polities until well after their first forays into the Indian Ocean. By highlighting different polities of that region, and by studying the importance of European nonstate actors such as trading companies, they destabilize the state-centric bias of previous studies (Phillips and Sharman 2015; Phillips 2021; Sharman 2019).

Collective belief systems as the basis of international orders

The turn to global history has greatly added to our understanding of the variation across regions and history. However, international—or global—historical sociology needs to better articulate a methodology for this type of research (Go and Lawson 2017). I propose several elements that might inform such a methodology.

The French Annales School has a great deal to offer in this regard. The approach associated with Fernand Braudel (1980, 1984) is discussed extensively in Brieg Powel's chapter in this volume. I would simply add that, even though Braudel drew attention to material factors, he acknowledged the importance of long-held collective beliefs. Other Annales scholars emphasized the importance of shared attitudes—a

collective mental frame of looking at the world—even more. Marc Bloch, arguably the founder of the school, noted the importance of Durkheim's *mentalité collective*, the shared beliefs that defined the contours of a society. Jacques le Goff and Georges Duby took this approach further and illuminated the collective beliefs of medieval France that formed the basis of the social, economic, and political order (Duby 1980; Le Goff 1980, 1988). Religious interpretations informed the tripartite ordering of society into those who prayed (the clergy), those who fought (the aristocracy), and those who labored (the general population). The medieval mentality was viewed structurally, as determining the material order rather than the other way round.

The nature of medieval mentality could be deciphered on various levels and through multiple means. One might read the diaries of individuals to discern their fears and hopes. One could study the means of legitimation of clerical and political authority. The analysis of architecture, cemeteries, urban design, rituals, etc. all provided further evidence of how collective beliefs were made manifest in every sphere of life. This *mentalité collective* did not fluctuate with current events but held a relative permanence, the mentality of the *longue durée*.

This approach intersected with the interpretive methods of cultural anthropology. To understand different cultures, one had to immerse oneself as much as possible within the mindset of the "Other." Clifford Geertz (1973) thus famously spoke of "thick description." Observation of actions was insufficient; one needed to delve into the context in which the actors were placed and understood their own actions. Just as Wittgenstein had argued that words had to be understood within the particular language game of which they were part, so Geertz and Marshall Sahlins emphasized the meaning of contingent and changing context. Similar to the Annales' conceptualization, Sahlins noted, "By the 'structure of the conjuncture' I mean the practical realization of the cultural categories in a specific historical context, as expressed in the interested action of the historic agents" (Sahlins 1985: 15).[7]

In short, using insights from the Annales scholars and cultural anthropology, I argue that international societies are heavily influenced by collective belief systems. These have an evaluative as well as normative content. They establish what people regard as the existing political order and what the political order ideally should be. In the remainder of this chapter, I provide several instances of non-European international orders to demonstrate how this proposed approach can be deployed, without suggesting that these societies constitute the universe of theoretically important cases. Indeed, much research needs still to be done on the pre-Columbian Americas and polities in Africa prior to, and during, the colonial encounter (Ferguson and Mansbach 1996).

International orders beyond Europe

Studies of the East Asian Tributary system provide a clear challenge to mechanical and positivist conceptions of international systems (Fairbank and Chên 1968; Kang 2010; Le e 2017; Park 2017; Zhang and Buzan 2012). David Kang shows that East Asian states engaged in far less inter-state conflicts than their European counterparts. Relations between Korea, China, Japan, and Vietnam were particularly benign in the last millennium. Kang's explanation places primacy on the shared beliefs extolled in the Confucian doctrine in which station and hierarchy were culturally embedded. "Goals, beliefs and national identities of East Asian states were more important to explaining their relations than was the balance of power or their level of economic interdependence" (Kang 2010: xi). Similar to patriarchal family relations, the lesser states recognized Chinese supremacy and paid tribute to the Chinese emperors. In exchange for tribute, the Chinese emperor would respond with generous trading relations and convey legitimacy on the supplicant ruler (Lee 2017).

The literature on the tributary system is too vast to discuss in detail in the confines of this chapter. Suffice to say that it amplifies the importance of social interaction and shared ontological views. The lack of inter-state conflicts among the core states of this society thus provides an empirical puzzle. The focus on East Asia also opens new avenues for research in how collective beliefs can be analyzed, how ideas manifest themselves in material orders, and how practices might be manipulated by creative agency.

This requires a study of the context in which these polities operated. One must look for evidence in texts, rituals, patterns of trade, architecture, language, and the multiple ways in which beliefs are manifested in practice. This reveals that Confucian texts were widely disseminated in the region, and elevated to administrative practices (Ebrey 1981: 68–69; El-Amine 2015; Rozman 1981). Historical accounts by the protagonists indicate their understanding of the practices within the tributary context. No doubt, one must recognize that the official transcripts were distorted to fit the preferred narrative, but there was a given narrative, a given cognitive scheme in which the actors operated. Likewise, one can demonstrate that Chinese architectural styles diffused through the region and that polities deliberately adopted Sinic script. Court styles mimicked the Ming and Qing courts. Their cultural hegemony was thus well established (Wang 2018).

As pointed out earlier, one must recognize that collective beliefs are malleable and open to manipulation and distortion, yet all these behaviors could be made to fit with the performative script. Thus, when the Song paid tribute to the northern empires as the Liao and Jin, official Han chroniclers would account for these as generous gifts bestowed willingly on grateful inferiors—rather than acknowledging the power of the non-Confucian empires.

Material relations were thus made to fit a shared ideological script on both sides. Such flexible interpretations by individual agency do not invalidate the concept of cognitive schemes. As Sahlins notes, individuals creatively change and alter the existing

conventional schemes in reaction to events and other actors' behavior (Sahlins 1985: 103, 148; see also El-Amine 2015: 95, 99).

To be clear, while collective beliefs can serve to mitigate inter-state conflicts, as they did in the East Asian tributary system, this is not necessarily the case for other international societies. An international order can exist without rules to limit conflict. Indeed, a society might contain rules that allow for considerable violence between its members. Thus, although a collective belief system informed the Islamicate order, this did not preclude violent conflicts, particularly between the Ottoman and Safavid empires, that were partially driven by the divergence of Sunni and Shi'a views on Mohammed's legitimate succession (Lewis 1982). Nevertheless, throughout the Islamic ecumene Muslims adhered to shared core religious tenets, such as holding the Koran as the foundational text and fulfilling the five duties required from each Muslim (Toorawa 2013). They agreed on the importance of *sharia* (Islamic law), even if it came in multiple interpretations, and the *umma* (the idea of a shared community of believers), as the basis of social and political order (Hourani 1991: 4).

These shared religious views intersected with communal narratives regarding their Central Asian heritage, with many rulers claiming genealogical affinity with the great world conquerors Genghis Khan and Timur. Architecture, rituals, artistic styles, and language (with Persian the preferred literary and diplomatic medium) all served to establish the Islamic society as a coherent order (Koch 2012; Kolodziejczyk 2012; Necipoğlu 1993). The Islamic civilizational complex consisted of a group of interacting polities with a shared ontological view of what the ideal order should be and what constituted legitimate authority.

In Southeast Asia, one might similarly discern an international society. Although the contours of this society were less clearly defined, one can nevertheless recognize a shared collective belief system across the region with strong Hindu and Buddhist influences. Hence, Coedès (1975) spoke of a common Indianized world. Many other scholars have similarly treated these polities as an integrated, albeit not hierarchically organized, civilizational complex (Tambiah 1976; Reid 1988; Wolters 1999). Indeed, recognizing the region's historical coherence remains relevant to understanding its politics today (Acharya 2012).

In Southeast Asian international society, the order hinged on the parallel of cosmological views and political organization (Heine-Geldern 1942). Particular numerical sequences and the mandala schematic gained wide traction across the region.[8] These cosmological principles were made manifest in architecture (Kramrisch 1955; Wheatley 1971); political organization (Shorto 2002; Tambiah 1976); alliance systems (Andaya 1993); and in many spheres of social life (Spruyt 2020: chs 8–9).

It is impossible to do justice to the logic of organization and the collective beliefs systems of these non-European orders in this limited space. Suffice to say, they differed markedly from the Westphalian state system in numerous respects. Authority justified itself as universal rather than spatially circumscribed. Alliance patterns, diplomatic

interactions, the modalities of hierarchy—all challenge common IR expectations and thus reveal the value of studying these non-European orders.

Conclusion

None of this argument suggests one should adopt an essentialist and static view of international societies. One should be mindful of variations within international societies across space and time. For example, within the East Asian system, the position of the Japanese emperor made Japan a reluctant partner, and indeed, one of the few major wars occurred between Japan and the Ming Dynasty in the sixteenth century. The Tokugawa shogunate withdrew altogether from the system in the course of the seventeenth century (Toby 1991). Likewise, while recognizing an Islamic civilizational complex, one must also admit that non-Islamic polities, particularly from Central Asia, influenced the logic of political organization and modes of legitimacy in the Islamic world. Finally, these international orders changed over time, most notably due to external pressures and challenges from the Western powers as they started to make inroads into the Middle East and Asia.

Historical sociological analysis of these orders refutes the idea that non-European international societies were self-contained (Unger 1987; Wallerstein 1974a). While such empires often claimed universal dominion, the realities of power dictated that these empires had to acknowledge their limits in practice. In addition to armed conflicts between different international societies, economic and cultural interaction meant that ideas and practices flowed freely across the Eurasian area (Curtin 1984; Sood 2011; Barfield 1989: 204: Atwood 2004a: 368; Spruyt 2017a). Frontier zones in particular were fertile zones of encounter. Rulers deployed multi-vocal means of legitimation to deal with the plurality of communities that came with such encounters. Emperors could claim to be many things to many people (Bang and Kolodziejczyk 2012; Crossley 2008).

Studying non-European international societies also reveals considerable toleration of diverse religions and ethnicities. The military ruthlessness of the Mongol rulers must be balanced against their open-minded policy with regards religion (Atwood 2004b). The Ottomans, while justifying their struggles as ghazi warriors, wove Christians and Jews into the social fabric (Barkey 2008: 81; Darling 2000).[9] The Mughal empires, particularly before Aurangzeb, impressed European travelers as being far more tolerant than Europeans themselves. Tolerance was not a liberal European invention (Kinra 2013, 2015).

History casts a long shadow. How publics understand these past orders continues to influence politics today, as Buzan and Goh (2020) show with reference to East Asia. Likewise, it is imperative that scholars and elites re-examine the interconnected histories of the West (however defined) and other regions. Related to this last point, one must conclude that the idea of unidirectional influences flowing from the West to the

East is a conceit rather than an empirical fact. The claim that non-European international societies failed to adjust to modernity and the Westphalian system due to intransigence, as Bozeman (1960, 1984) argued, is simply wrong. East Asian states and Islamic polities, notably the Ottoman Empire, adopted European practices on diplomacy and the recognition of borders, and shifted to the creation of bureaucratic systems. But by denying these non-European polities equal civilized status, European states elevated themselves. The inferior "Other" thus contributed to the definition of the alleged superior self. This identity, in turn, had the effect of justifying the modernization of nineteenth-century European states. At the same time, the denial of civilized status could justify the colonial enterprise, the imperial project couched as a civilizing mission. Thus, non-European polities were not regarded as part of the Law of Nations (Anghie 2004; Bowden 2009; Kayaoğlu 2010; Keene 2002; Spruyt 2020).

I conclude with Gadamer's insight that to study history is to encounter one's own biases. The positivist-empiricist will claim that one can predict actions from the observation of material forces. Indeed, one can proceed from the simple assumption that actors, whether individuals or states, are utility maximizers. Hence, given a certain balance of power between x and y, one can predict what x and y will do. Historical and social analysis exposes the fallacy of such claims. Indeed, it reveals that the idea that politics is the result of the kinetic interaction of forces—the Newtonian mechanistic understanding of politics—is itself based on a historically contingent set of collective beliefs. It is a product of our modernity.

Notes

1. Much of the ahistoricist bias in IR can be attributed to the appeal of structural realism, particularly as expounded by Kenneth Waltz (1979, 1986). While his theory identified three features of international order, only the number of powers and the distribution of power were considered relevant to explain variations among international orders across history.
2. Arnold Wolfers (1962) noted this perspective but had reservations regarding its use.
3. We are prisoners of our language. The term "*International* Relations" already reveals a bias to a modernist view of relations between states, and even of nation-states. While I cannot escape prevalent conceptualizations, I use the terms "inter-polity," "inter-state," or "inter-national" to try to destabilize this concept.
4. While Waltz does not explicitly base his argument regarding equally opposing forces on Newton, he does refer with admiration to Newton's model for its ability to unify "previously disparate empirical generalizations and laws that could be subsumed in one explanatory system" (Waltz 1979: 6).
5. The view that hegemonic dominance underlies stability can also be found in political economy. Hegemonic stability theory thus advances the notion that a dominant economic actor is critical to a stable global economy (Kindleberger 1979).
6. This area is growing so fast it is virtually impossible to capture in its entirety. For some key works, see Hobson (2012); Buzan and Lawson (2015); Phillips and Sharman (2015); Lawson (2019); Pardesi (2019); Reus-Smit (2019); Sharman (2019); Buzan and Goh (2020); Spruyt (2020); Buzan and Acharya (2021); Phillips (2021); Zarakol (2022).
7. Sahlins also refers to Bourdieu's notion of "habitus," the internalized mental schematic of a given society (Sahlins 1985: 30). See also Bourdieu (1977: 72). Drawing on Geertz and Sahlins, Iver Neumann (2011) demonstrates how a cultural anthropological approach could illuminate the basis of European diplomatic practices.

8. The mandala was a cosmic diagram, which consisted of one or more circular and square forms that could be of increasing complexity and which informed the architecture of palaces and temples, as well as political organization (Bertling 1954; Chutintaranond 1990; Bafna 2000).
9. Again, though, one must keep variations in mind. The Ottoman tolerance fluctuated particularly in the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, partially in view of external pressures (Zarakol 2020).

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CHAPTER 18

DECOLONIZING INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION

The centrality of imperial and colonial relations, processes, and dynamics to the constitution of the modern world is becoming increasingly recognized by scholarship across the social sciences and humanities (Pahuja 2011; Meghji 2020; Shilliam 2021). Burbank and Cooper characterize empires as being large or expansionist political units that maintain distinction and hierarchy as they expand, affirming that this has been the predominant mode of political rule in human history (Burbank and Cooper 2010: 8). Colonialism, which I would identify as a specific instrument of imperialism, can be characterized as a form of political organization that is expansionist, hierarchical, violent, and dispossessive in its operations, centrally involving the displacement, elimination, or subjugation of peoples, lands, and polities. By way of illustration, the British had an imperial relationship with China in the late nineteenth century, but it was not necessarily colonial, as it was in Australia or Kenya. For the purposes of this chapter, nonetheless, given the visibly colonial character of modern Europe-centered imperial orders, and the frequent elision or co-referencing of these terms in debates surrounding them, I will variously refer to empire, imperialism, and colonialism in the discussion.[1]

Whilst characteristic of many historical periods, the practices of imperialism and colonialism are particularly dissonant with the narrative of Western modernity as being a force for liberation, involving the spread of democracy, nationalism, the Rule of Law, transparent and rational governmental institutions, progressive industrialization, and human equality. Rather, what comes into view when seeing this historical formation as *colonial* modernity is the mutual constitution of dispossession and "freedom," war and "pacification," labor and capital, and so on in the modern era, almost always predicated on a racialized hierarchy of the human. The social sciences have failed to reckon fully with the implications of this mutual constitution for how we understand the world—not least sociology, the field organized around the study of "modern" societies, and International Relations, the field concerned with their interactions.

This chapter examines what it means to "decolonize" an enterprise like International Political Sociology (IPS), as defined by the editors of this Handbook, or at least what comes of asking the question of whether it can, and should, be done. I argue that many of the resources and sensibilities that are characteristic of IPS—specifically an orientation of relationalism, an attention to intersubjectivity, and a commitment to historicism—can contribute to interrogating or mapping the colonial constitution of the modern world. However, a decolonizing project pushes in specific substantive intellectual and political directions, which may also come into tension with it, and/or require strategies that go beyond it. I ultimately argue that, moving beyond practices of acknowledging colonialism, scholars working in IPS must attend to the substantive political questions centered in specific struggles if they are interested in "decolonizing" the field.

The second section of the chapter sets out what is increasingly recognized as the "challenge of empire" to scholarship in the social sciences, particularly International Relations and sociology, linking it to how IPS is defined as an orientation in this Handbook. The third section sets out intellectual and political aspects of struggles against empire and colonialism in the twentieth century that have come to shape the meanings of "decolonization" as we understand it today, drawing attention to the key critiques of empire developed therein. In the fourth section, I look at the substantive and methodological contributions of decolonial thought within the academy in order to show how they can reshape our analyses. The final section deliberates further on the characteristics of IPS as an orientation to analysis and how it relates to a decolonizing tradition grounded in the political practice of struggle.

As an opening consideration, it is worth acknowledging that not everyone agrees that "decolonizing" is the appropriate term to use for this kind of intellectual endeavor. In their influential contribution, Tuck and Yang (2012) argue that "Decolonisation is not a metaphor," by which they mean that forms of cultural or educational acknowledgment of colonialism in settler contexts is no substitute or comparison for the concrete rematriation of land and sovereignty to Indigenous peoples. In a period when calls to "decolonize" cultural, historical, and educational practices, structures, and institutions have become more widespread in anglophone metropolitan spaces, their intervention is doubly critical for foregrounding struggles for Indigenous sovereignty and encouraging caution where activities are labelled "decolonizing" but actually seek to consolidate colonial and/or settler futurity via moves to "innocence."

That said, both Bhambra (2022) and Gopal (2021) have argued persuasively that there is a space for thinking about the analytic contours of "decolonization" in metropolitan intellectual spaces insofar as it advances a reparative agenda for Europe —one that attends to what Mignolo has called "the colonial wound" (Mignolo 2007: 159): the legacies of violence, exclusion, impoverishment, and dispossession resulting from colonialism and the racialized, gendered, classed orders that it helped to instantiate. This goes well beyond "bringing in other voices" as part of "diversification: projects. Rather, the agenda for decolonization makes transformative demands of social

orders at both discursive and material levels by recognizing the mutual but unequal constitution of the "West" and the "Rest." To the extent that "decolonizing IPS" is a meaningful activity, it can be understood as part of this broader intellectual direction and agenda, which builds on its historicist sensibilities in particular.

Why decolonize? Empire and colonialism in the shaping of international order

It is now commonly recognized that there are three linked problems regarding empire and social theory: first, most mainstream social and political thought has largely erased or ignored histories of empire and colonialism in the making of the modern world; second, empire and colonialism were, nonetheless, foundational in the making of the modern world; and, third our conceptual architecture for understanding the world (i.e. much of what passes for international theory) is therefore profoundly deficient and/or biased in various ways.

With respect to the first problem, the case is made in different sub-fields of the contemporary academy as well as at a wider epistemological level. Within International Relations, the problem of the substantive absence or erasure of empire from our understanding of the international system has been elaborated widely, including by Barkawi and Laffey (1999, 2006), Vitalis (2000), Krishna (2001), Gruffydd Jones (2006), and others (e.g. Doty 1996; Barkawi 2017; Thakur and Vale 2020). This has been linked to the ways in which such an erasure reproduces a particular white-racialized subject position within International Relations (IR) theory (Sabaratnam 2020). The work in IR resonates with work challenging the absence of reflections on empire and colonialism on the history of liberal political thought (e.g. Mehta 1999), philosophy (e.g. Mills 1997), and sociology (e.g. Go 2011; Bhambra and Holmwood 2021), as well as more widely (e.g. Cooper 2005; Connell 2007). Given that many of these fields —including, and perhaps especially, IR—were founded at the height of European imperial control, its absence from mainstream discussions is a particularly salient problem (Long and Schmidt 2005). On the one hand, this problem can be understood as relating to the wider tendency in IR to dip selectively in the historical record in the service of evidencing supposedly transhistorical theories (Hobson and Lawson 2008; Lawson 2012). On the other hand, as Krishna (2001) and Barkawi and Laffey (2002) have shown, the problem is often not that specific historical periods are absent but rather that their specifically *imperial* character is erased.

This matters, if we come onto the second problem, because the structures and processes that emerged or were consolidated in (primarily) Western colonial empires over the eighteenth to twentieth centuries were the foundation of what we understand to be the modern world (Bayly 2004; Buzan and Lawson 2015; Osterhammel 2015). A classic case in point is the "Industrial Revolution"—traditionally articulated as the

outcome of British scientific endeavor and changes in the class structure in England but actually dependent on the deindustrialization of competitors such as India; the production of primary commodities by enslaved, indentured, or imprisoned laborers around the world; and the military-political dynamics of domination that enabled the sustenance of these imperial and colonial structures of extraction, exchange, and accumulation (Bhambra 2007: ch. 6). In IR, the common sense has been of a field concerned with "Great Powers" and their interactions (see Waltz 1979) but with a clear aversion to understanding these "powers" (meaning states) as imperial formations, which is, of course, what they were (Hobson 2012: 205; Sabaratnam 2020: 19–20). Indeed, there is evidence that imperial standing and expansionist practice were precisely what was required to join the "club" of great powers (Suzuki 2005). Instead, IR, in part through its evolution as an "American social science" (Hoffman 1977), anachronistically reified the "nation-state" as the primary unit of its analysis and "anarchy" as the structure in which those units interacted (Hobson and Sharman 2005), instead of understanding the field as more properly concerned with inter-*imperial* relations (Barkawi and Laffey 2006).

Problems one and two bring us onto the third problem pertaining to the place of empire in IR—that as a result of neglecting this profoundly formative dynamic in history, the field has misconceived a number of key problems and concerns, from its basic ontological commitments through to the methodological and epistemological orientations it has developed. Beyond what has been already mentioned, these include, but are not limited to: a neglect of racism as a key structure of the modern world (Doty 1996; Anievas, Manchanda, and Shilliam 2014; Henderson 2013); a neglect of the field's theoretical and methodological Eurocentrism (Hobson 2012; Sabaratnam 2013; Tucker 2018); ignoring the dynamics of hierarchy and mutual constitution within and between societies (Rosenberg 2006; Halperin 2013; Anievas and Nişancioğlu 2015); a neglect of political thought and analysis rooted in non-Western/nonhegemonic geo-cultural standpoints (Shilliam 2010, 2015; Tickner and Wæver 2009); a misreading of key institutions such as international law (Grovogui 1996), sovereignty (Branch 2013), and war (Barkawi 2016); a neglect of political formations outside the West (Niang 2018); and the role of settler colonialism and its racial anxieties in establishing states and the international order (Kripp 2021; Davis 2021). Cognate arguments are made for the field of sociology (Go 2016; Bhambra and Holmwood 2021). What broadly links these shortcomings might be understood as a failure to understand the nature of the asymmetrical and hierarchical distinctions—fundamentally racialized ones—which operate throughout these spheres and their consequential character for how peoples and political formations have related to themselves and each other.

Thinking about the opening chapter to this volume and its definitions of the constitutive sensibilities of IPS, we can already start to see ways in which IPS as an orientation toward researching the international could start to contribute to the alleviation of these problems. For example, by emphasizing a relational approach to

social analysis, imperial relations of co-constitution between North and South start to come into view, enabling a broader view of the imperial formations that have structured —and, in many cases, continue to structure—the world. To understand phenomena such as what are called "failed states" relationally is to see the degradation of political governance and economic conditions in particular spaces not simply as a result of racially projected political incapability but as the product of a complex set of global conditions and relations that span military interventions, global capitalist economic hierarchies, and political networks (Gruyffdd Jones 2008). Similarly, an emphasis on intersubjectivity elevates the analytic significance of powerful discourses within empire, such as the "standard of civilisation," racial anxieties, Manifest Destiny, the White man's burden, and other racialized tropes in having a clear impact on how and why particular historical practices and courses of action were pursued/tolerated/excused (see Manchanda 2020). Indeed, these were central to the production of a hierarchical and dualist international political structure in which the "modern world" unfolded. Finally, a "historicist" approach to international order could facilitate a deeper engagement with the complex, and sometimes contradictory, ways in which imperial order-making took place and the patterned character of those practices today. For example, an examination of the historical practices of counter-insurgency has lucidly illuminated the continuities in this form of violent governance into the present, as well as its relationship with the invention of modern social categories (Khalili 2012; Owens 2015; Sen 2022). Taken together, there are some immediately identifiable resonances between the problems posed by empire to social theory and the kinds of approaches endorsed by IPS. More broadly, IPS's tendency to draw widely on intellectual resources from many fields and spaces is consonant with the anti-colonial critique of the disciplinary organization of knowledge (Gordon 2014).

So far, so good. But does this mean IPS is "decolonized" or "decolonizing"? To reflect on this question more fully, we need to explore how those involved in struggles against empire and colonialism understood these formations and examine how they understood the meanings and challenges of "decolonization," before turning to the impact of anti-colonial, post-colonial, and decolonial thought on the academy.

The struggle against colonialism and the praxis of decolonization

As with any form of political domination, imperialism and colonialism met with resistance and critique, collaboration and complicity. The story, character, and content of this resistance and critique in the West has been historically muted as part of a self-congratulatory narrative about the supposedly orderly and peaceful character of decolonization—a position left untenable by recent prominent histories (e.g. Anderson 2005; Gopal 2020). Whilst much anti-colonial thought and practice, particularly by non-

elite actors, is not well recorded or known to wider audiences, given the colonial structure of record-keeping, we do nonetheless have a rich archive of anti-colonial thought and practice from around the world which has been increasingly recognized (e.g. Prashad 2008). Much of this archive has come from empire's "insider-outsiders"—that is intellectuals and activists who were not completely marginalized by imperial and colonial structures but rather embedded or interpellated dissonantly within them. Sometimes, critique and resistance were directed to specific arrangements, taxes, or laws, but increasingly they amounted to a wider critique of colonialism. Here, I briefly bring together some major themes from this archive to illustrate its sensibilities about the meanings of decolonization, which extended well beyond—and sometimes did not even include—formal national independence (Wilder 2015; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013).

A primary thread in anti-colonial thought, particularly from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century onwards, is an incisive, relentless critique of the imperial economic model of the colonial powers—capitalism as practiced in imperial systems and colonial spaces. As one would expect, this is particularly pronounced amongst the revolutionary and communist elements of the transnational anti-colonial movement but is inflected and present across nationalist, liberal, and "conservative" elements, as well as those without conventional affiliations. These involve both critiques of the effects of imperial capitalism on people drawn into it (such as exploitation, degradation, poverty, hunger, death, dispossession, and famine), as well as of the wider structural model itself, specifically the clear racialization of wealth and property, the alienation of the worker from the product of their labor, the loss of land available for sustenance, capitalism's extractive and expansionist character, the hoarding of wealth in the metropole, and the resultant structure and interests of the ruling classes in both the metropole and the colonies (e.g. Roy 2016). Even amongst more conservative nationalists, there was recognition of the economic exploitation and degradation wrought by imperialism, both on its own terms and as a necessary part of an anti-colonial political and intellectual platform. "Decolonization" thus always meant some form of economic transformation, although what this entailed in practice was contested, and often resisted, by imperial powers.

A second central thread within anti-colonial critique has been to reveal the hypocritical, violent, and racist character of what was presented as the "liberal humanism" of the West. This critique was particularly prominent amongst the anti-colonial intellectuals who travelled within Western metropoles and were therefore most regularly exposed to this ideology, which conflicted with their own experiences, their analysis, and their wider knowledge of events in the world (e.g. Césaire 2000 [1954]). From the grand to the mundane, phenomena such as imperial wars, genocides/massacres, authoritarian modes of colonial governance and the suppression of dissent, color bars and forms of apartheid, the use of torture, and unequal systems of justice and applications of the law were part of colonial life, but they were reflected

also in the racism and hostility experienced in the metropole by colonial subjects invited to study or work there. In these environments, colonial subjects developed autonomous networks to forge their own conceptions of liberation, of humanism, and of being (e.g. Harlem Renaissance, *Négritude*). This prompts a wider debate about whether anti-colonial movements were "completing" the Enlightenment by challenging its racism or generating a distinct conception of human flourishing rooted in a different standpoint and, indeed, the extent to which racist views informed various anti-imperial and anti-colonial thinkers (Mills 2002; Robinson 1992; Israel 2008). Nonetheless, there was a convergence around the undeniable hypocrisy and asymmetry embedded in the West's supposedly "universal" idea of "Man," requiring a different articulation of "humanity."

A third critical, related element relates to attempts by various empires to extinguish, degrade, or make irrelevant the languages, historical memories, heritages, values, cultural expressions, and political formations of colonized peoples, spectacularly illustrated by the destruction of the Mayan libraries by the Spanish conquistadors. This was not a universal feature of colonialism—indeed, where it suited them, colonial powers reinforced, modified, or invented particular forms of "tradition" as a means of managing populations, such as the caste system in India, where they were also encouraged by some domestic elites (Bayly 2001; Pannikar 2003). Even in these spaces, however, there was a clear hierarchy in terms of colonial languages, cultural expressions, and discourses and their relationship to power, such as through French language policies in Africa (Ahluwalia 2005). In other contexts (e.g. the settler colonial projects in North America and the South Pacific), the aggressive elimination of Indigenous culture proceeded inter alia through policies of child removal and forcible residential schooling for Indigenous children, who were not permitted to speak their own languages, and many of whom were never reunited with their parents (Wolfe 2006). In each context, "decolonization" has centrally entailed the creation of space and significance for the recovery of historical presence, community, heritage and memory, and the maintenance and curation of living knowledge traditions (see Shilliam 2015).

This overview makes clear that central elements of the ideas and practices underpinning decolonization were formed in a dialectical relationship with colonialism. Just as diverse strategies and techniques of colonial control and governance traveled around the empire, so did the ideas and practices for mobilizing resistance. A significant part of this context throughout the period were armed uprisings against the organized violence of empire, which was met with significant repression and exemplary violence against populations. The stark, oppositional conceptions of decolonization that emerge famously in Fanon (1963), but also elsewhere, are the direct reflection of this context of colonial violence. Moreover, the national bourgeoisie-led form that most independence movements ultimately resulted in was usually the product of political coalition building amongst a diverse group of actors in the context of the limited opportunity structure for independence embedded in imperial power. Understanding

decolonization as a set of orientations that is both historically located and that speaks to wider patterns of oppression and resistance is critical for thinking about what "decolonization" might mean in the contemporary intellectual sphere, and for a project like IPS.

Existing intellectual resources for IPS

With that contextual point in mind, it is nonetheless important to consider the archive of intellectual tools and resources developed with an anti-colonial, post-colonial, or decolonial inheritance in the academy as a basis for decolonizing IPS. This section examines the tools associated with key themes—global political economy, the problem of colonial knowledge, the condition of being colonized, decolonizing methodologies—before returning to the question of what they mean for IPS.

First, the received impression of post-colonial thought, particularly as understood by prominent Marxists, was that it lacked a structural account of the global political economy (e.g. Chibber 2014). Without wanting to revisit the details of those discussions, it is an important corrective to recognize the significant weight of thinking about the global political economy and the historical structures of modernity within the anti/post/decolonial intellectual tradition, which has had a constitutive relationship with critiques of capitalism throughout this period. Kwame Nkrumah's term "neocolonialism" (1965), for example, was definitive in shaping the understanding of many regarding the continuities in global political-economic structures following the formal independence of African states (see Getachew 2019). Similarly, both dependency theory and world-systems theory are structural accounts of the global economy and world order that emerged from direct engagement with the post-colonial conditions and histories of the Global South in the 1960s and 1970s by thinkers such as Raúl Prebisch, Walter Rodney (1981), and Immanuel Wallerstein (1979. African-American and Caribbean writers across the century, such as W. E. B. Du Bois (1999 [1935]), C. L. R. James (2001 [1938]), Eric Williams (1994 [1944]), and Claudia Jones (Lynn 2014) emphasized the historic association of racism and capitalism, summarized by Robinson's (1984) term "racial capitalism." Many Subaltern Studies scholars worked within a Marxist intellectual tradition. More recently, the term "modernity/coloniality," popularized by decolonial thinkers such as Quijano (1992); Mignolo (2000, 2002); and Lugones (2007), captures precisely the continued structural entanglement of global capitalist modernity with the exploitation of the non-Western world. This non-exhaustive library for understanding the structures of the global political economy help map both its entrenched and asymmetric transnational patterns of circulation and the knowledge-systems that are central to their maintenance.

The second cluster of tools elaborates a critique of colonial knowledge, which has otherwise projected itself as universal, enlightened, rational, and so on. The most

prominent element of the critique has been a concern with the nature of representation in colonial discourse of its "Others." This can be traced through Said's *Orientalism* thesis (2003 [1978]), Pratt's account of the imperial gaze (1992), Wallerstein's elaboration of Eurocentrism (1997), and the work of Stuart Hall and colleagues (1978) on the production of racialized crises in hegemonic metropolitan discourse. In each of these accounts, the colonial imaginary as it is embedded in art and literature, social science, and public policy is identified not as neutral or descriptive but the outcome of racialized, dehumanizing, politically functional ideological projections. A second part of the critique has sought to interrogate the nature of colonial epistemology itself—specifically its racist conception of the human (Wynter 2003; Eze 1997); imagined omniscience and binary thinking (Mignolo 2000); its relationship with deliberate ignorance (Mills 1997); and its epistemic tendency toward cutting rather than relationality (Shilliam 2015). With these and other influential tools, the pervasive coloniality of representation and epistemology in hegemonic academic and non-academic discourses has been widely unpacked and deconstructed.

Third, we can think about how this intellectual tradition has conceived of the existential and sociological conditions of being subordinately racialized or colonized. One of the most prominent formulations of this has been the concept of "double consciousness" present in the work of Du Bois (2008 [1903]) and Fanon (2008 [1952]; see Gordon 2007), which articulates, for the most part, the condition of being racially interpellated and alienated, whilst also resisting this interpellation through one's human presence and being. This builds on Césaire's formulation of colonization as a form of "thingification" and resonates with Bhabha's (2004 [1994]) analytic of colonial processes of hybridization and mimicry. Whilst, on the one hand, double consciousness is a dissonant experience, it also potentially provides a ground for creativity, synthesis, the cultivation of life and resistance, connectedness, and collectivity, as expressed in movements such as *Négritude*. Anzaldúa has referred to this as a place of "border thinking" (1987), resonating with the idea in Bhabha of the "third space" (2004 [1994]). Experiences of uprisings, fugitivity, and marronage have also been identified as historical and epistemic locations for anti-colonial and decolonial struggle (Buck-Morss 2000; Shilliam 2017), as have attempts to recover repressed histories, cosmologies, and languages (Cusicanqui 1986). The conception of the colonized as "subaltern" in being excluded from hegemonic culture has also informed a significant element of this tradition, even if its methodological consequences were subject to dispute (e.g. Spivak 1988). Overall, however, there is a shared sensibility of the experience of the colonized as being one of more or less incomplete domination—a human (and sometimes more-than-human) political subjectivity forged in the context of power, violence, resistance, struggle, presence, and creativity.

Finally, it is worth looking at how this tradition understands "decolonizing" methodologies for both research and teaching. We can understand these broadly as addressing the questions of recovery, ownership, and re-positioning. "Recovery" may

involve, for example, linguistic and discursive displacement of colonial languages and ideas (Thiong'o 1986; Nandy 1989 [1983]); Indigenous or down-pressed knowledge traditions (Smith 1999; Pete 2018); the facts of colonial histories and violence (Bhambra 2007); the realities and narratives of marginalized groups (Mohanty 2003); and so on. In a teaching context, this involves engaging students to recover their own lineages and traditions as part of their learning, particularly if those have been repressed or erased by the colonial encounter as part of a dialectical process of re-presencing what is absent. The question of "ownership" aims to reverse the habitual objectification of "Others" as "specimens" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013) rather than knowing subjects who can, and should, conduct their own research (Smith 1999). This speaks to the wider set-up of research in terms of its funding, review, accountability structures, feedback loops, and so on, which continue to position those in the Global North and academic institutions as the knowing subjects, in contrast to the peoples who are "researched." Strategies for engaging consensually and respectfully at all stages of the research process—including considering whether some research projects are appropriate for a particular researcher to undertake—are central to thinking about how and whether research can be "decolonized" or indeed whether it should be "refused" (Tuck and Yang 2014). In a teaching context, this requires a breaking of the monopoly of power/knowledge of the academic/instructor in cultivating educational questions and teaching strategies.

Finally, the question of positionality remains central to decolonizing approaches—specifically the effort to counter the faux-neutral and faux-universal positioning of hegemonic narratives with accounts of the world that reflect the situated experiences and positioning of other groups. For many thinkers, this represents prospectively a fuller picture of social realities than hegemonic accounts. For teaching purposes, the question of positionality is paramount, particularly in recognizing the role of education in the reproduction of ideologies and tropes emergent from colonialism and the assumption of a specific disposition toward these (Rutazibwa 2018). By confronting the problem of positionality, however, educators and students are more empowered to remake that relationship within the scope of their classrooms, whilst recognizing the limitations of any such efforts (see also Decolonising SOAS Working Group 2018).

I have briefly mapped key aspects of the rich tradition of anti-colonial, post-colonial, and decolonial thought that emerged from struggles against the colonial condition and its structural legacies in the modern world, as part of the discussion about how and whether we can "decolonize IPS." This grounding has been undertaken, in part, in order to counteract the contemporary perception of decolonization as a "buzzword" (Bhambra, Gebrail, and Nişancioğlu 2018), devoid of content and meaning, amenable to appropriation and co-optation as a form of counter-insurgency against anti-racist struggles in the present. To the contrary, this mapping indicates the substance, seriousness, and thoughtfulness of anti-colonial positions, their resonance across many

geographic and intellectual sites, and their relevance for a wider understanding of the power–knowledge nexus today.

Decolonizing IPS and its limits

The first section of this chapter explored some important ways in which the central commitments of IPS, as defined in this volume, could help to address the problem of empire and coloniality in social theory. This section argues that to "decolonize" more effectively, IPS has to engage more directly with the nature of intellectual and political struggle that has defined the decolonizing movement, which may, in turn, require modifying some of its core commitments. As a grounding for this, I build on the post-colonial scholarship on IPS's most prominent inspirations: Bourdieu and Foucault.

Bourdieu and Foucault are extensively drawn upon within the tradition of IPS because they offer important resources for interpreting the operation of power in modern society at the level of the "everyday"—that is to say, the less—or even unconscious—reproduction of relations of power through regimes of knowledge, rationalities of government, symbolic power, practices, and so on.[2] Their critiques complicate and challenge liberal conceptions of freedom, which are built on premises of individual rationality and agency, as well as structuralist accounts, which bypass the ways in which power is reproduced, altered, or challenged. The adoption of their tools has been principally by scholars seeking to deconstruct politics and power in self-identified "liberal" spaces and institutions (e.g. Evans 2010; Eagleton-Pierce 2013; Adler-Nissen 2012; but also Jabri 2007), which I would argue has been the hallmark of work within the IPS umbrella.

Beyond noting the lack of prominence of the colonial encounter in the reception of Bourdieu and Foucault, recent post-colonial scholarship on both thinkers has engaged their time in French former/colonies—Bourdieu in Algeria and Foucault in Tunisia—and traced the ways in which these experiences informed their major contributions (e.g. White 2021)—or did not.[3] Nirmal Puwar (2008), for example, examines Bourdieu's relationship with Algeria and Algerians as one of the major intellectual influences on his oeuvre, while Go (2013) argues that Bourdieu had a theory of colonialism and racism that underpinned his conceptions of habitus and field. Stoler (1995) has carefully excavated Foucault's analytics of racism in regard not just to empire but also to sexuality, and Jabri (2007, 2012) has used the Iranian Revolution, on which Foucault commented provocatively, as a means to read his conceptions of subjectivity and resistance. This scholarship notes the Orientalism and Eurocentrism in some of this work (see Medien 2020), of course, but it has increasingly moved toward mobilizing Bourdieu and Foucault within the "new colonial studies"—that is work which locates metropole and colony as part of a "single analytic field" (Cooper and Stoler 1989: 609).

Whilst this is a productive strategic move in terms of shifting the fields of sociology, history, and IPS toward a deeper engagement with the colonial question, I would argue that there is, nonetheless (compared to the thinkers that we have examined hitherto in this chapter), a diminished engagement with the nature and direction of anti-colonial struggle from below as a generative site for rethinking the political. Montesinos Colema n and Rosenow (2016) have made this argument with respect to critical security studies —that it has tended to unnecessarily delimit its imaginative horizons through a relentless focus on the Western security apparatus, rather than thinking through the struggles of people against that domination as a more expansive and useful ontology of the political. Such an approach foregrounds not only the discursive and physical violence meted out by structures but also the very objects over which struggle is taking place. I would argue that IPS might be similarly characterized—as focused deeply, as were Bourdieu and Foucault—on the productive character of liberal-modern power structures, rather than dwelling with and alongside the concrete political struggles taking place from below. Attempts to recover their colonial roots rather than re-enter the field through different lenses thus constrains the possibility of decolonizing IPS.

Further, understanding decolonization as a form of struggle means that IPS's core commitments—relationalism, intersubjectivity, historicism—will be themselves transformed or modified by the terrain of struggle. Whilst understanding, of course, the relational character of identities and structures, the nature of critique and struggle nonetheless requires, in Spivak's words a "strategic essentialism" (Grosz 1985: 184) or "tactical subjectivity" (Sandoval 1991) in order to precisely produce the political location that is erased or effaced by colonial discourse because it cannot be fully contained by it. Similarly, whilst one can appreciate that social relations are governed by intersubjectivity and the shared production of meaning, there is something very important to examine at the point of its failure—where dominant discourses have not fully hegemonized society and where dissident formations and interpretations offer a point of pushback, schism, or alternate standpoint for evaluating social structures. Finally, an emphasis on historicism and the patterned but evolving character of social structures must be located alongside a rethinking of the *positionality* from which change is assessed. Put more bluntly, elite groups and actors may experience more historical "change" in terms of subjectivities, mobilities, and modalities of rule than those who are disempowered by those same processes. For example, being subject to the "new" algorithmic extractions of surveillance capitalism (Zuboff 2019) may be experientially relevant to elites but still requires the "old" disposability of racialized miners in the Global South to dig the metals for the technology out of the earth under conditions that may be the same, and terms of exchange that may be worse, than previously. This is precisely due to the ongoing hierarchies and dualisms embedded in the colonial character of modernity articulated by the decolonial tradition. A project to "decolonize" IPS must therefore always consider its direction of analytic travel and struggle as well as which tools it uses.

Conclusion

IPS has been an important development within IR, which has greatly enriched its sociological and historical imaginaries, its methodological orientations and curiosities, and the overall direction of the field. It shares its anti-disciplinary tendencies with lots of productive work taking place across the social sciences and humanities, which has understood the necessarily interconnected character of social realities across the categorical convenience of disciplinary divides. Such a field of inquiry, of course, necessarily meets the demand to "decolonize," which is in a contemporary sense *en vogue*, but which is rooted in its own rich traditions of rethinking society, politics, and world order through the lens of anti-colonial, post-colonial, and decolonial struggle. In bringing together these traditions, already influenced by and influencing each other in their historical entanglement, we have the opportunity for a productive and reflexive engagement in which our understanding of the myriad forms and instruments of modern power can be animated by a shared sense of struggle against the alienation produced by its colonial form.

Notes

1. For a more detailed discussion, which also argues for contemplating the terms together, see Kumar (2021).
2. See special issues of the journal *International Political Sociology* on Bourdieu (2011, 5 (3)) and Foucault (2010, 4 (2)).
3. I thank Jasmine Gani for the reminder of Said's disappointment on meeting Foucault, Sartre, and De Beauvoir in Paris regarding their failure to engage the question of settler colonialism in discussions about Israel and the Palestinians (Said 2000).

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PART IV

ORDERS

CHAPTER 19

THE ENDURING QUESTION OF INTER NATIONAL ORDER

CHRISTIAN REUS-SMIT AND ANN E. TOWNS

INTRODUCTION

In many respects, as Shipping Tang observes, "[t]he problem of order has been an enduring and fundamental question in the social sciences, deeply ingrained in our thoughts since ancient China and ancient Greece" (2016: 30). If anything, this is even more the case with International Relations (IR), a discipline that has been drawn inexorably to questions of international order for theoretical and historical reasons. The conventional narrative about the field's origins holds that it emerged in response to the crisis of order created by the First World War. IR is imagined here as one of the last great Enlightenment projects, a social science devoted to understanding the causes of war and fostering peace, often through the design and construction of novel international institutions. Such views are now widely criticized. IR is still seen as a field animated by issues of international order, but rather than a war-torn system of sovereign states, particular civilizational, economic, and racial hierarchies are seen as woven into the fabric both of international order and the field of IR itself. Indeed, the very same IR scholars who advocated the construction of a new international order around the League of Nations saw this as essential to the survival of Europe's colonial empires (Morefield 2005), as did many of the later proponents of the United Nations (Mazower 2009). Western racial imperatives were central to this project—as Robert Vitalis (2015) shows, US IR emerged as an explicit response to perceived threats to a white supremacist order, within the United States and globally.

The scholarship on international order is massive in scope. Any attempt to survey how international order is conceived and analyzed in International Political Sociology (IPS) immediately confronts the question of what IPS is, or what it should be. On one view, IPS is a broad church. As Goddard, Lawson, and Sending argue in the introductory chapter to this Handbook, IPS thus conceived includes all perspectives and approaches committed to some form of *relationalism* (the notion that actors and entities exist and function through their relations so that relations constitute and analytically precede actors, entities, and other phenomena); *intersubjectivity* (the primacy of socially shared meaning and meaning-laden institutions and practices); and *historicism*

(the contextual grounding of phenomena as contingent historical processes). Rather than a static condition, IPS understandings of order are often better captured through the verb "ordering", indicating a meaning-laden and relational process that is in motion. In this respect, IPS is defined by its rejection of the international as a distinct, self-producing political realm and by its attempt to break the shackles of mainstream political science.

On another view, however, IPS is a more narrowly conceived critical theoretic project. Heavily influenced by an array of critical social and political theory, this version is doubly anti-foundational, rejecting both ontological reifications and epistemological absolutes. In this form, IPS seeks not just to escape the constraints political science imposes on mainstream IR but to rethink the "international" and the "global" from entirely different ontological, epistemological, and methodological starting points.

If one adopts the broader view of IPS, then the contours of its engagement with issues of international order look very different than if one adopts the narrower view. When delineated as a critical project, IPS largely resists notions of international order as a structural formation separate from the discourses that constitute it; sees all ordering practices as hierarchical exercises of power; and, as a consequence, challenges unreflective assertions that international order in general, or a specific historical order (such as the "liberal" international order) is a human good. When IPS is conceived more broadly, however, a wider range of perspectives on international order come into view. Indeed, if IPS encompasses all perspectives that treat the international as a contingent social product, and that enlist theoretical insights from sociology and other disciplines beyond IR, then it includes everything from historically informed constructivist and English School accounts of international order, through arguments from actor-network theory and relational sociology, to the aforementioned critical scholarship.

In what follows, we adopt the broader view of IPS, along the same lines as the editors in the introductory chapter. We do so in part because this reflects our own preference for seeing IPS as a broad church but also because it enables a far more interesting and variegated mapping of how IPS scholars have approached questions of international order. Indeed, IPS scholars differ markedly in how they conceive international order, as this chapter will delineate and discuss.

There are many ways to approach, disassemble, and examine IPS as a broad church, not only because the volume of IPS scholarship on order is so massive but also because there is so much diversity and disagreement on nearly every aspect of international order. Virtually all IR scholars, including those who fly under the IPS banner, use the term "order" to denote some form or stability or regularity (e.g. Bially Mattern 2005: 29), contrasted with disorder, instability, and change. But what *kinds* of regularities are to be included in the conception of order? The editors contend that international order concerns "*regularized practices of exchange among discrete political units that recognize each other to be independent*" (Goddard, Lawson, and Sending, this volume,

emphasis in original). We find the definitional inclusion of "exchange among political units that recognize each other to be independent" to be unnecessarily restrictive, as many IPS scholars conceive of order in other ways. As our discussion below will show, international order is not necessarily conceptualized in terms of "political units," nor necessarily in terms of units that "recognize each other to be independent." Ordering practices may furthermore entail more than practices "of exchange." Indeed, there is little agreement in the literature even on the basic nature of international order.

To conceptualize and analyze international order, IPS scholars use a plethora of more specific order-concepts: anarchy; hierarchy; hegemony; heterarchy; pluriverse; empire/imperialism; international, world, or global society; the capitalist world-system; colonial and post-colonial order; the global color line; and more. They sometimes cut into international order thematically, with concepts such as legal order, security order, or economic order. Others conceptualize international order in terms of various axes of differentiation—for example, Western order, racial order, class/capitalist order, or gender/patriarchal order—that are sometimes understood to intersect to produce, for example, racial capitalist order. When scholars analyze these different renderings of order, they in turn employ another tier of concepts that help conceptualize and identify the constituent parts of order and how the parts hang together. These include concepts such as institutions, social fields, assemblages, networks, norms, rules, ideologies, discourses, grammars, performances, practices, rituals, logics, subjectification, and much more. To comprehend order and select appropriate concepts, IPS scholars draw on a wealth of social theoretic and philosophical resources, including practice theory, actor-network theory, Wittgensteinian language theory, historical institutionalism, historical sociology, Michel Foucault's opus on discourse and governmentality, Durkheimian sociology, Marxist sociology, symbolic interactionism, post-colonial and decolonial theory, feminist theory, US Black studies, critical race theory, and more.

To say something meaningful about this massive, diverse, and complex body of scholarship in one chapter, we have opted to focus on a few enduring substantive questions that animate much IPS scholarship on international order. This allows us to map large swathes of IPS scholarship on order and showcase its richness and theoretical diversity. One set of questions concern the place of the state in international order. How central are states to international order? How was a world consisting of pluralism ordered into one of states as the primary political units? How should orders between states, and between states and other entities, be conceptualized? As our discussion shows below, IPS provides divergent answers to these questions, drawing inspiration from foundational sociologists such as Weber, Marx, and Du Bois to more contemporary scholars in order to center bureaucratization, transnational class relations, race and coloniality, and more, in ordering processes.

A second set of fundamental questions concerns whether international order is best conceived as one or multiple orders (or perhaps as no order at all). A large body of IPS scholarship takes issue with international order as singular, instead advancing claims

about the plural nature of international orders. This scholarship ranges from "new regionalism" studies to practice accounts on contextually emergent orders and post- and decolonial accounts of the pluriverse. In turn, other IPS scholars insist that international order is an illusion, much like Cedric Robinson once argued that Western social science ignores "the fundamental nature of social disorder" (Robinson 1980: xi).

In organizing the chapter around these fundamental questions, we try to systematize the mass of scholarship while highlighting the theoretical wealth within IPS. We will also show that the three broad ontological commitments that the editors identified in the introduction as core to IPS—to relationalism, intersubjectivity, and historicism—run through, and in some way unify, the otherwise diverse IPS scholarship on order. In the concluding discussion, we set out some directions for future scholarship on international orders, encouraging IPS scholars to speak across the various "camps" (Sylvester 2007, 2013) that have developed within IR.

The chapter is structured as follows: we begin by briefly considering some very abstract conceptual agreements and disagreements on order within IPS. The chapter then quickly moves to the substantive questions on international order, with two larger sections on (i) enduring questions of the place of states in international order and (ii) debates over whether international order is best conceived of as singular or as multiple orders and whether there is, in fact, any order at all to international life. Again, as the scholarship on international order is massive, ours is a mammoth task. Thus, although we have included a great deal of literature from a broad swath of IPS, our attempt to depict IPS scholarship on order cannot be exhaustive. Rather, our chapter is an attempt to bring some order to a portion of the enormous body of scholarship on international order from our limited horizons.

Before proceeding, a word is needed on terminology. We have argued here that a focus on international order is hard-wired into IR, and that this is true for IPS as well as mainstream scholarship. But although writings on order have grown steadily since the late nineteenth century, roughly matching the rise of IR as a self-conscious field of inquiry, authors have often referred to "world" or "global" order instead of "international" order: indeed, the first of these has been most common. Furthermore, there have been peaks of interest in questions of order, all in periods one would expect: after the First World War, the Second World War, and the end of the Cold War, with another uptick in the past decade.

Although some scholars carefully distinguish between global, world, and international orders, we make no such distinction in this chapter. Instead, unless a distinction is warranted for the purposes of our discussion, we rely primarily on the terminology of "international order" as a loose umbrella term that encompasses global and world orders.

Conceptual distinctions: Order as purposive arrangements or emergent properties?

As we noted in the introduction, virtually all IR scholars use the term "order" to refer to some form of regularity in international life. IPS scholars furthermore agree on the relational, inter-subjective, and historical character of order. Their interest in international order tends to pivot around an interest in the constitution and organization of relations between units, actors, or parts rather than in an interest in the units/actors/parts "in themselves." Rulers and their ability to rule are thus approached as a function of order (for more on rule, see the chapter by Jorg Kustermans in this volume). Beyond these fundamental premises, there is great theoretical variation among IPS scholars on the basic character of order. In this section of the chapter, we introduce a few of these basic variations as a preliminary way of orienting the reader to some theoretical cleavages on order within IPS. These will recur in the subsequent sections on the more substantive questions about international order.

One early "social" conception of international order treats it as a *purposive arrangement*, building more or less explicitly on Hedley Bull's influential account. Bull defined an international order as "a pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states, or international society" (1977: 8). Bull held that the purpose of order is to secure an elementary social life (among states) by arranging security, the sanctity of promises, and stability of possession. Such social goals are "arranged" by state actors through international rules and institutions. Numerous IPS scholars have taken their cue from this definition. For John Ikenberry, "[i]nternational order refers to the settled rules and arrangements that guide relations among states" (2011: 47). Georg Sorensen prefers the term "world order" but still defines it "as a governing arrangement among states with global reach" (2011: 3). And Evelyn Goh, writing on order transitions in East Asia, adopts Bull's conception almost word for word, defining international order as "a pattern or arrangement that sustains the primary goals of a society of states" (2013: 7; see also Allan 2018: 5; Bially Mattern 2005: 30).

IPS scholars who question this conception push away from it in many ways, reflecting the many meta-theoretical directions IR scholarship has taken in recent decades. We identify and briefly discuss four directions this scholarship has taken, recognizing that this is not an exhaustive discussion. With the first, scholars retain the focus on a patterned, institutionalized arrangement of political units but drop the assumption that the units are sovereign states, as we will see below in some of the discussion of state-centrism. Some contemporary IPS scholarship on order remains essentially Bullian but relaxes the state-centric assumption, not least to accommodate historical changes in international orders (e.g. the Western and non-Western imperial, suzerain, and heteronomous political orders that have dominated world history; and the fact that a worldwide international order of sovereign states has only existed since the

1970s, after post-1945 decolonization had run its course: Phillips 2011: 5; Reus-Smit 2018: 194; Phillips and Reus-Smit 2020: 9).

Rather than an "arrangement" made by actors, a second group of IPS scholars have sought to reimagine international orders as *emergent properties* in different ways, whether of *social networks, communities of practice,* or of *discursive rationalities and techniques of governance* (or more). Daniel Nexon provides one of the clearest expressions of the social network perspective, arguing that international structures (which include international orders) are best understood as "nested relational configurations," or as "network[s] of networks co-constituted by the network structures of the actors that populate it, and also by the structure of social ties across and between them" (Nexon 2009: 26). From this perspective, sovereign, hegemonic, and imperial international orders can be compared on the density of their network ties and on the relative "homogeneity of categorical identities," understood as "social positions that constitute the actors located within them" (Nexon 2009: 45; Nexon and Wright 2007, 256;. See also Goddard 2018; Kendall 2004; MacDonald 2014; Maoz et al. 2006; on assemblages, see Latour 2005: 8).

Network scholars differ in how they understand interactions as such, however. At one extreme, we find rationalist-inclined network analysis at the border of IPS, which emphasizes the density, direction, and structural effects of transactions among already constituted actors. On this view, "[t]he ties or links among actors (nodes) create a structure (a persistent pattern of relations) that in turn serves to constrain actors or provide opportunities for action" (Kahler 2011: 5. See also Nexon 2009: 64). For many IPS-oriented network theorists, shared rules and norms serve as rhetorical resources for well-placed but already constituted strategic actors. Stacie Goddard's account of Prussia's nineteenth-century rise is a good example, where counterbalancing failed to occur because Prussia's legitimation practices artfully appealed to prevailing rules and norms (2009). In this view, shared rules and norms may emerge from bargains between self-interested actors, but once established, they constrain and enable—rather than constitute—individual and collective action. Many network theorists attach little weight, then, to the constitutive power of intersubjective meanings.

By contrast, most IPS scholarship stresses how transactions interpellate, constitute, and bring into being forms of agency and social identities. Transactions are meaning-laden, and the norms, scripts, or grammars they draw on—or "cite," in the language of Judith Butler (1990)—instantiate and reiterate role identities and, in turn, forms of agency. For example, an important strand of recent scholarship sees hierarchies as relational constructs with constitutive effects on agency. Hierarchies, on this view, "shape actors within a structure of differentiation as particular kinds of agents with particular capacities for action that belong, or do not belong, in some space of world politics" (Zarakol 2017: 7). Hierarchical orders, agents, and the placement of agents in the hierarchical order are all emergent properties of meaning-laden interactions (e.g. Towns 2010, 2012; Zarakol 2017; Towns and Rumelili 2017).

The idea that international orders are emergent properties of interactions also finds expression in practice theory. Practices are defined as "socially meaningful patterns of action" that "develop, diffuse, and become institutionalized" in communities of practice (Adler and Pouliot 2011: 6, 16). International orders, on this view, "are configurations or 'landscapes' of practices and communities of practice that straddle a spectrum between interconnectedness and disassociation" (Adler 2019: 23).

IPS scholarship on order that draws inspiration from Michel Foucault's rich conceptual world also approaches order as emergent and thus also departs from the early Bullian understanding of international order as purposive arrangement. Central to these understandings of international order are concepts such as discourse, rationalities and techniques of governance, the power–knowledge nexus, subjectification, and more. In particular, Foucauldian IPS scholars have advanced the notion of "global governmentality" to understand and examine international order in terms of transnationally circulating "political rationalities and technologies" that are disciplinary and productive of particular kinds of subjects on local and global scales (e.g. Larner and Walters 2004). Some scholars use the concept of governmentality specifically to entail practices of "discipline"—the individual internalization of power—and "biopower"—the control of "birth and death rates, living conditions, issues of health, hygiene, reproduction, and indeed population movements" (Epstein 2007: 152). However, governmentality may also be used as a broader concept (e.g. Larner and Walters 2004). Global governmentality points to governance processes that may be diffuse and contextually particular but which, nonetheless, cohere into encompassing orders, whether biopolitical, neoliberal, neocolonial, or something else. As we will discuss further below, while also treating order as an emergent property of decentralized governance processes, Foucault-inspired scholars tend to see order as more extensive and systematic than do many practice theorists.

To center or not to center states in international order

In our limited discussion above, it should be clear that IPS scholarship on order takes many theoretical directions. If we instead turn to the substantive issues that animate IPS, we contend that questions about the extent to which and how *states* figure into international order and ordering is of crucial importance to much IPS scholarship. Indeed, a significant body of IPS work is, in one way or another, devoted to a critique of state-centric conceptions of international order (Guzzini 2017: 368). That said, quite a few IPS scholars do place states at the center of international ordering, and few would sideline states entirely, as we show below. IPS assessments of the importance of states consist of two related questions: (i) of what entities has the international primarily come to consist and (ii) what is the ordering relation among these entities? The first question conceives of international order in terms of regularities or systematic patterns

in the kinds of entities that populate the world, an issue fundamentally related to the second question of what kind of ordering is taking place among these entities. Much IPS work understands entities through their relations so that entities emerge and transform through their ordering relations.

The place of states in turn relates to how "the international" is conceptualized in discussions of order. Among many IPS scholars, rather than a realm "outside" or "among" nation-states conceived as bounded units, the international is conceived as processes that cross-cut state borders as conventionally understood. In such conceptions, ordering processes are always transnationally linked, consisting of "global circuits," "diffusion," or "flows." Rather than assuming a separation between domestic and international politics, much of this scholarship asks—although in different ways—how domestic/international distinctions have come to be, how they are maintained, and/or how they are undermined and illusory. In the remainder of this section, we will begin by examining some IPS approaches that place states at the center of international ordering, and then turn to a discussion of some of the many IPS challenges to state-based conceptions of order.

How has the world become ordered into one of states?

A range of IPS approaches do place primacy on states when querying about international ordering. One fundamental question concerns how the world has become ordered into one of states. Given the historical variety of polities, when, where, and how did "the state" as a particular set of institutions and territorial claims emerge and spread, displacing other forms of political organization on a global scale? When addressing this question, IPS work highlights the transnational environment and relations through which states have developed (e.g. Philpott 2001; Spruyt 1994; Yao's chapter on spatial order in this volume). Charles Tilly's relational approach and focus on the interactive relation between war and state development has been of particular significance (e.g. 1975, 1990). Interested in the trajectory specifically of European state development, Tilly locates the historical emergence and transformation of European states in the relations among them. More specifically, he contends, variants of the national state developed due to the economic and geopolitical pressures of war—European rulers centralized power and developed administrative extractive apparatuses in order to fund wars.

Tilly's central argument—"war made states and vice versa" (Tilly 1990: 67)—is a historical argument about Europe. As most states are not European, a number of scholars have looked at the transnational processes through which states in other parts of the world developed, particularly during periods of decolonization. For instance, how did Latin America become ordered as a continent of territorial states in the nineteenth century, and how has the practice of sovereignty changed in the region over time (Atkins 1989; Sikkink 1997; Schulz 2019)? Likewise, in the post-colonial period,

how did the pan-Arabic world come to consist of a number of separate sovereign states rather than, say, one unifying Arab polity (Barnett 1995)?

Furthermore, why do so many states seem to take on similar institutional forms, with similar bureaucracies and interests expressed in similar terms (Thomas et al. 1987; Meyer et al. 1997; Finnemore 1993, 1996a, 1996b; Towns 2010)? Unlike the pre-1945 period, post-1945 state transformations did not primarily take place through war-related processes (Lee 2018: 287). So if not through war, then how?

Many scholars locate at least some of the answer in the emergence of global or regional social standards of statehood, i.e. in norms, scripts, discourses, practices, rationalities, and governance techniques that have come to circulate globally or regionally after 1945. For instance, in the chapter on spatial order in this volume, Joanne Yao contends that control over nature has been a key social standard in the development of territorially bounded states (see also Yao 2019). The centrality and historically changing character of "sovereignty"—constitutive both of states as entities and of relations between them—has been the subject of much of this scholarship (e.g. Bull 1977; Barnett 1995; Chowdhury 2018; Grovogui 1996; Jackson 1990; Reus-Smit 1997, 1999, 2001; Shilliam 2006). In an early intervention, Jackson (1990) contends that the extension of the international institution of "juridical sovereignty"—resting on juridical recognition of territory and independence of new states by existing states—accounts for the transformation of colonial territories into formally sovereign states in much of Africa. "The international society of states was formed to support the doctrine of states' or sovereigns' rights as a cornerstone of international order" (1990: 17), Jackson contends. Anti-colonial movements could thus lay claim to this doctrine in their struggles for independence. Also departing from the premise that sovereignty has come to serve as a *grundnorm* of "the modern sovereign order," Reus-Smit argues that anti-colonial movements used emergent human right norms to morally legitimize their claims for sovereign self-determination (Reus-Smit 2013; see also Sikkink 1997; Spruyt 2000). In a contribution on sovereignty to this volume, Arjun Chowdhury provides a rich and insightful discussion of the international and external dimensions of sovereignty, effectively examining sovereignty's fundamentally social, relational, and historically variable character, illustrated with an examination of the (non)sovereignty of Haiti.

In addition to asking how the world became ordered into one of states, a number of scholars have asked how and why the institutional infrastructure and aims of states often take such similar form globally. Why and how have states come to express their interests in such remarkably similar ways (Finnemore 1993, 1996a)? Why and how have states come to be internally organized in such similar ways, with capitals, flags, national anthems, ministries and other bureaucratic agencies, and so on. Since the 1970s, members of the so-called "Stanford School" of international sociology have advanced a "world polity" approach to address these questions. They point to the emergence and diffusion of a Weberian world culture that produces increasingly similar units: bureaucratized states, but also other organizational forms and rational individuals

(Berkovitch 1999; Finnemore 1993, 1996a, 1996b; Meyer 1980; Meyer et al. 1997; Thomas et al. 1987; Towns 2010).

The answers to these question about the ordering of the world into states and into particular kinds of state institutions vary theoretically, however. Critics have contended that the world polity approach, as well as much scholarship on international norms, lack a relational conception of power and hierarchy (e.g. Towns 2010). IPS scholars have also borrowed Foucault's concept of governmentality in order to foreground the power–knowledge nexus and the complex relationship between knowledge and state governance (e.g. Larner and Walters 2004: 2). With the help of Foucault, IPS scholars seek to capture the growing managerialism of the modern state as a product of changing and transnationally circulating discourse, examining its transformation from the "state as sovereign," where law, rights, and territoriality were its principle characteristics, toward the "governmental state," where rationalized state power is deployed in "multiple and polymorphous 'tactics and strategies of population management' " (Epstein 2007: 151). While governmentality reorders the state, "neoliberal global governmentality" is said to constantly reconfigure the wider "international" order in which states exist (Tosa 2009).

IPS characterizations of the main dynamics of global state transformation clearly vary theoretically. What these analyses of the global standardization of and change in state polities nonetheless share is the historical embedding of states in a dense transnational context of social relations that help produce and transform states as a central set of entities globally. Central features such as territoriality, sovereignty, and bureaucratic institutional forms are approached as social practices, as ongoing accomplishments rather than as static traits.

Theorizing order relations: Centering or decentering states?

The scholarship discussed above approaches order in the sense of a global ordering *into* states. An intimately related set of issues concerns how to characterize ordering processes *among* states and whether state relations should be decentered in favor of other kinds of relations. The English School concept of international society was advanced to capture an equalitarian order among mutually recognized sovereign states, noting the important managerial role played by Great Powers (Bull 1977). Since then, much IPS scholarship has been preoccupied with how to best understand and depict social ordering among states and their relations to other actors.

One body of work challenges the equalitarian assumptions of the English School, insisting that order among states is one of hierarchy, a vertical ranking of states, a view also at odds with realist arguments about relative material power inequalities (Barder 2015; Donnelly 2009; Hobson and Sharman 2005; Bially Mattern and Zarakol 2016; Mac Donald 2018; Towns 2010, 2012; Towns and Rumelili 2017; Yao 2019; Zarakol 2017). Though the specifics vary, this work advances accounts of *social* hierarchies among

states, rooted in discursive and materially mediated processes and governed by social ordering principles and logics that position states as superior and inferior to one another (Towns and Rumelili 2017). In this vein, feminist scholars have shown various ways in which gender functions to (re)produce international social hierarchies among states (e.g. Enloe 2016: 102; Sjoberg 2011, 2012, 2017a, 2017b; Towns 2009, 2010. See also Sjoberg's chapter on gender and order in this volume). Recent international order is also often identified and examined as Western, with states positioned in hierarchies between the West and "Others" (e.g. Biswas 2014; Stuenkel 2016; Zarakol 2011).

This scholarship follows other IPS traditions and debates about international hierarchies among states. Key among these is the ongoing debate about hegemony and hegemonic orders. Accounts of hegemonic order often place a predominant state at the center of international order. Many of the features of international order—basic rules of the game, norms, and institutions—are then attributed to the intentions, actions, or domestic culture and institutional arrangements of hegemonic states. IPS scholars challenge such accounts by insisting that "hegemons are not just order makers but also order takers" (Ikenberry and Nexon 2019: 399)—they exist in a complex web of hierarchical relations that enable their position as hegemons. Hegemonic orders have thus been theorized as a "social institution in international society" (Clark 2009, 2011; Goh 2013, 2019; Mendelsohn 2009); "network structures" (Goddard 2018; MacDonald 2018); and in terms of Bourdieusian "fields" (Nexon and Neumann 2018), which structure hegemony and enable and constrain hegemons and contending states in various ways.

The neo-Gramscian understanding of hegemony as a form of class rule, in turn, rests even less on a dominant state, conceptualizing hegemony as the production of consent to an international class order through the configuration of material power, norms, and ideologies, and national and international institutions (Cox 1981:136–139; Bieler and Morton 2004: 88. See also Burnham 1991; Chase-Dunn 1994; Cox 1983, 1987, 1996; Hall 1986; Hopf 2013). The liberal hegemonic order of the end of the Second World War to the mid-1970s rested in part on the United States as a dominant state, these scholars claim, but equally importantly on the economic relations and ideology of "embedded liberalism" (Ruggie 1982)—with its emphasis on international free trade, the Keynesian welfare state, Fordist production, and the Bretton Woods organizations. These liberal economic relations are furthermore fundamentally racialized (e.g. Hall 1986; Robinson 2000). In addition to embedding states among international financial institutions, global firms, and transnational class networks, neo-Gramscian scholars emphasize state–civil society complexes, insisting that hegemony also works through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), media, religious actors, and so forth (Rosenberg 1994; Cox 1999).

In our assessment, very little IPS scholarship is statist in the sense of defending a conception of international order as exclusively, or even primarily, state-based. Even

though a significant body of work places states at the center of analysis, states are always entrenched in a rich ecology of actors and relations. That said, much IPS scholarship also decenters states in one way or another. For instance, recent debates on imperialism in part hinge on whether imperial orders differ in some fundamental way from state-based hegemony (Ferguson and Mansbach 2007; Ferguson 2008; Go 2008, 2012; Nexon and Wright 2007; Nexon 2008). In turn, order scholars that rely on concepts such as liberal hegemony, Western hegemony, global capitalism, or neoliberal order generally put a complex of institutional arrangements, ideologies, and relations in focus rather than a hegemonic state or an imperial formation. Their focus also includes attention to relations among a multiplicity of actors/polities/assemblages other than states. For instance, Ferguson points to the importance of "families, tribes, cities, firms, religious organizations, international governmental organizations (IGOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and so on" in contemporary international order (Ferguson 2003: 32). Private transnational regulators (Büthe and Mattli 2011), transnational business relations (Cutler, Haufler, and Porter 1999), and transnational capitalist class relations (Sklair 2002) have also been identified as central in critical accounts of international order.

A world with such a wealth of actors and relations could, of course, still rest on an order with a core—such as a hegemon or an imperial center—that serves as a central coordinating node and that provides coherence to the multiple parts. However, for many IPS scholars, the complexity of international politics seems to preclude conceiving of international order as one dominated by a single actor or set of actors. Instead, concepts such as liberal hegemony, neoliberal order, global racial capitalism, Western hegemony, or the global color line are advanced to simultaneously draw attention to the complex multitude of actors, relations, institutional assemblages, and ideas, *and* to the systematic patterns or unifying logic that give this multitude some sort of coherence, even if contextually variant and rife with contradictions and tensions.

For instance, there is an insistence on complexity in the rich scholarship on race and international order (see Clive Gabay's chapter on racial orders in this volume). There is also an insistence that the central ordering at stake is not one among states but one among groupings of humans who are racialized and placed in racial hierarchies that are transnationally reproduced, resisted, and restructured (e.g. Anievas, Manchanda, and Shilliam 2015; Barder 2021; Bell 2012, 2013, 2020; Chowdhury and Nair 2002; Du Bois 1903, 1925; Gabay 2018; Gruffydd Jones 2008; Shilliam 2006, 2015; Thompson 2013). Indeed, multiple agents, institutions, practices, ideologies, and grammars are implicated in racial ordering; the reproduction of white supremacy; and in racial violence within, among, across, and beyond states.

To make sense of this as patterned and systematic, a number of IPS scholars have been inspired by the work of US sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois on race, colonialism, and political economy, borrowing his concept of a global "color line" (Du Bois 1903: 13). Like Du Bois, and often also drawing inspiration from post- and decolonial scholars,

they tease out connections between European colonialism; scientific and philosophical racism; and patterned relations of racial segregation, domination, and resistance across the world. In this vein, Vucetic has examined the racialized identity integral to the "Anglosphere" that has been so central to liberal international order (Vucetic 2011; see also Doty 1993, 1996; Bell 2020). Gruffydd Jones charges that the "starkly racialized" character of global socio-economic inequalities must be examined in order to account for "the reproduction of racial inequality by an international order formally committed to racial equality" (2008: 907; see also Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Robinson 2000). In turn, Barder forcefully contends that "racial hierarchy and difference were crucial for the development of the very idea of global order" among US and European thinkers and policymakers, and that this racial international order functions to produce and sanction racial violence (2021: 1). Audie Klotz (1999), Robbie Shilliam (2015), and a range of other scholars have instead centered the complex transnational relations and shared cosmologies of anti-colonial actors who resist and seek to change a racial order that, while manifesting differently across context, is simultaneously global, transnational, and local.

The simultaneity of complexity and coherence also characterizes much of the scholarship that draws on Foucault's writing on neoliberal governmentality (Larner and Walters 2004; Lipschutz 2002, 2005a; Neumann and Sending 2010). In these accounts, global neoliberal ordering is understood as a dispersed regime of governance, consisting both of "rationalities" of governance and of "technologies" of enacting such rationalities (Miller and Rose 2008). Neoliberal governance produces particular kinds of "locales, entities and persons able to operate a regulated autonomy" (Rose and Miller 1992: 173), meaning that they are empowered to "do the right neoliberal thing" in a self-regulating manner that generally requires little coercion. In Lipschutz' rendering (2002: 2019),

> Actors are socialized to behave according to certain tenets of "normality" and "propriety," and thereby produce and reproduce both their identities and the "normal" conditions under which such behaviour takes place. Deviance is permitted, up to a point, but it is also actively policed and disciplined in order to reinforce concepts and practices of normality … Order is maintained through the self disciplining of behaviour, on the one hand, and the policing function of surveillance and law, on the other.

As sites of neoliberal governance, states (Fougner 2008), civil society organizations (Lipschutz 2005b; Sending and Neumann 2006), IGOs (Merlingen 2003), individuals, and so on are thus treated as both objects and subjects of neoliberal order.

In sum, whereas some IPS work approaches international order exclusively as ordering into or among states, the bulk of the scholarship (i) places states in a rich ecology of relations and actors and (ii) decenters the importance of states in

international order in one way or another. Crucially, IPS scholars furthermore provide very different accounts of what order is ultimately about. For some, ordering concerns the discursive, cultural, or field-specific production of subjectivities, polities, and their relations, and concepts such as hegemony, imperialism, and international hierarchies are deployed accordingly. For others, however, hegemony, imperialism, and international hierarchy are fundamentally about ordering class and economic relations, whereas for others again, these concepts are ultimately about racial ordering (even in accounts in which racialization is assumed to be produced in part through economic relations). Beyond the broad relational, intersubjective, and historical commitments, there is indeed little agreement in the literature on the basic nature of international order.

International order(s): One, many, or none?

Do ordering processes cohere, and if so, in what way? In addition to the issue of the changing character and place of states in international ordering, IPS scholars diverge on questions of whether the international at any one moment consists of one or multiple orders and whether there is, in fact, any international order at all. Much, though not all, of the scholarship discussed in the previous section approaches international order as one—even if multifaceted and multi-sited—complex with some form of unifying logic. For instance, much of the scholarship on liberal international order implicitly or explicitly makes an argument about one multifarious liberal order and attempt to tease out what are its central hierarchies, fields, sets of networks, fundamental norms, governance techniques, and regional dynamics.

A sizeable body of IPS work takes issue with international order as singular, aiming instead to pluralize international orders (Bauman and Dingwert 2015; Donnelly 2009; Rosenau 1990, 1997, 2006). Advancing concepts such as "pluriverse" (Rojas 2016; Escobar 2018); "heterarchy" (Baumann and Dingwert 2015; Donnelly 2016; Rosenau 1997); "a multi-centric world" (Rosenau 1990: 11, 2006: 41–43); "one world/many worlds" (Hurrell 2007b: 128); and international order as a "multiplex" (Acharya 2014), these scholars contend that international orders are multiple, consisting of various ordering processes that may only partially overlap or not overlap at all (Flockhart 2016). A key analytical challenge for this IPS scholarship is thus to work out the character of a world with plural orders and how to understand the relations between them.

One body of scholarship that has attempted to do so is the "new regionalism" literature that has emerged since the mid-1990s (Acharya 2009; Adler and Greve 2009; Barnett 1995, 1998; Buzan and Waever 2003; Fawcett and Hurell 1996; Hettne and Söderbaum 2000, 2006; Katzenstein 2005). As Hurrell (2007b: 130) points out, while centering some form of spatiality, "regionalism" is a blanket term in this scholarship, covering a range of very different ordering processes: societal interactions, regional

collective identity formation, regional inter-state cooperation, and more. A crucial division within this scholarship concerns the question of whether regions are to be understood as regional manifestations of one global order or whether they are more adequately understood as partially or fully autonomous orders with their own dynamics and logics. For instance, to what extent, and in what ways, does regional economic integration figure into a global capitalist order (Knox, Agnew, and McArthy 2014; Scott 1996; Robinson 2008)? To what extent, and in what ways, are regional IGOs held together and legitimated by global organizations such as the United Nations (Cox and Jacobson 1973; Gelot 2012; Weiss and Welz 2014; Biermann and Koops 2017)? To what extent, and in what ways, are institutional design and the very idea of "regions" and regional identities global scripts that diffuse and manifest in different parts of the world (Acharya 2004, 2009, 2011; Jetschke and Murray 2012; Jetschke and Lenz 2013; Risse 2016). These are but some of the questions that animate the debate on the place of regional orders in the world.

A more recent set of interventions on the singular or plural character of international order emerges from scholars who describe themselves as practice theorists. Drawing on sociologists such as Max Weber, Pierre Bourdieu, and Erving Goffman and the pragmatist philosophy of John Dewey, practice theorists form a broad theoretical family. They generally approach international ordering as emergent in and through "fields" or "communities of practice." However, whereas scholars such as Go (2008, 2012) and Nexon and Neumann (2018) advance ordering accounts in terms of a "global field"—"a worldwide arena in which states or other actors (corporations, nongovernmental institutions, international organizations) compete with each other over [economic, political or cultural] capital" (Go 2008: 207)—other practice scholars insist that international ordering is better understood as more bounded and confined at the micro level (e.g. Adler-Nissen and Drieschova 2019; Bueger and Gardiner 2015; Pouliot 2011, 2016a, 2016b). These latter practice scholars approach ordering as largely site or at least practice-specific, in large part autonomous from more encompassing social processes and relations of the kind envisioned by scholars examining global hegemony or empire. For instance, drawing both on Bourdieu and on Erving Goffman's notion of "interaction orders," Pouliot argues that orders are "micro structures" among individuals that emerge in the interaction situation itself (Pouliot 2016b: 12–13). This, in turn, leads to a view of international orders as manifold. As Bueger and Gardiner (2015: 453) contend,

> social order is appreciated as multiplicity. Instead of assuming universal or global wholes, the assumption is that there are always multiple and overlapping orders … This does not imply chaos, limitless plurality, or an atomized understanding of order. Orderliness is, however, an achievement. It requires work and emerges from routines and repetitiveness in "situated accomplishments" of actors … As such, order is always shifting and emergent.

In this vein, Pouliot has examined diplomatic hierarchies emergent in multilateral venues such as the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Pouliot 2011, 2016a, 2016b). Practice-specific "international pecking orders" develop and are reproduced among multilateral diplomats as these compete for rank through the display of practical diplomatic know-how, he contends. Crucially, Pouliot argues, the displays of diplomatic competence and the pecking orders these produce are not well captured as a function of the resources of the state the diplomat represents (Pouliot 2016b). Diplomats representing the United States, Germany, or Sweden do not necessarily emerge more highly placed in a diplomatic pecking order than a diplomat from, say, Guatemala or Mali. Adding a focus on "affordances," the enabling and constraining implications of technology, Adler-Nissen and Drieschova (2019) similarly argue that the interplay of technological affordances and situational diplomatic practice result in diplomatic outcomes that do not match structural hierarchies among states. In other words, emergent, practice-specific, and technological dynamics trump systematic resource inequalities that manifest in, say, mission size, legal expertise, or language skills in the production of multilateral outcomes. As situationally emergent, and pluralized, practices thus conceived do not align more comprehensively to march in step for either empire or hegemony. It seems that to these scholars, ordering practices are not meaningfully captured in macroscopic accounts.

A number of post-colonial and decolonial scholars in turn seek to "fracture" IR, advancing concepts such as the "pluriverse" and "mundialización" to propose global social diversities as alternative ways to conceive of international order (e.g. Ansems de Vries et al. 2017; Escobar 2007, 2017; Huysmans and Nogueira 2016, 2021; Mignolo 2000; Muppidi 2004a, 2004b; Querezaju 2016; Rojas 2016). Such fracturing often aims to interrogate the coloniality of modernity and "interrupt the modern commitment to one world" that places Europe or the West at its center (Rojas 2016: 374), whether found in academic scholarship or in the politics of the world. Here, critical examinations of the globalization of modernity are coupled with analyses of radical alterity and the heterogeneity of cultural formations around the world. What emerges are accounts of international order that acknowledge modernity as a global and colonial ordering project while simultaneously decentering its allegedly European core and foundations, centering instead the multitude of experiences, ways of being, and epistemologies of communities that are typically made invisible or peripheral in Eurocentrist knowledge production and modern/colonial ordering processes (e.g. Muppidi 2004a; Shilliam 2006, 2015). In short, these perspectives on modern/colonial ordering level fundamental challenges to IPS accounts construed around a single order with the United States or Europe at its center, as well as to scholarship resting on modern/colonial epistemologies.

The intensified interest in fracturing, micro practices, and contingently situated analyses among IPS scholars has, in turn, led some of these scholars to push back against the very idea of international order(s). The editors of a recent volume on IPS

advance the concept of "transversal lines"—"criss-crossing and generating diverse, plural and transnational social and political practices" (Basaran et al. 2017: 3)—to enable ways of thinking that do not "simplify everything into a form of 'order' " (Basaran et al 2017, 1–2; see also Ansems de Vries et al. 2017). In this rendering, neoliberalism, capitalism, and imperialism are seen as "master-signifiers" that impose totalizing narratives on a reality that is fluid, contradictory, and plural (Huysmans and Nogueira 2021: 5). Scholarship on international order is cast as symptomatic of a modern quest to bring predictability into a plural world in flux. In a similar line of argument, Bleiker (2004: 182) suggests that order scholars "superimpose order on random events, simply because we crave order in a world that appears increasingly complex and chaotic." Searching for patterns where there may be none, he suggests (2004: 181),

> we develop complex theories to visualize the exact outlines of an international society where there are in fact only blurred contours or none at all … we may not only overestimate the existence of order in international relations, but also overvalue its importance … disorder may both be the only reality we have and a valuable source of ethical politics.

Consider the contrast with scholars such as Andrew Hurrell, whose book on global order "is primarily an exercise in clarifying complexity" (Hurrell 2007a: 9). However, IPS examinations of a multitude of fragments are vulnerable to the counter-charge that fragmentation is superimposed on a world that *does* contain systematic hierarchies and structural inequalities and that, in doing so, such approaches mask the patterned inequities and power relations at work in orders. In an innovative attempt to counter being "locked in simply describing unconnected fragments of life," Huysmans and Nogueira turn to Deleuze for a conception of structure that avoids totalizing accounts of order (Huysmans and Nogueira 2021).

Some of this diversity among IPS accounts with respect to whether there is one, multiple, or no order is related to whether and how these scholars theorize institutionalization. "Institutionalization" refers to the embedding of relational practices in intersubjective rules, norms, discourses, and procedures. As such, institutionalization helps give practices and relations an enduring and regularized quality—order—with constraining and enabling effects on agency and action. For many IPS scholars, institutionalization is built into their conception of international order. All of the accounts that follow Bull in seeing international orders as purposive arrangements of sovereign states fall into this category, as do accounts that seek only to relax the state-centric assumption (Allan 2018; Bially Mattern 2005; Ikenberry 2011; Phillips 2011; Reus-Smit 2013; Sorensen 2011). Likewise, even though they advocate for a deeper, discursive understanding of intersubjective institutions, many Foucauldian approaches to international ordering emphasize the production of "the very social capacities of

structural, or subject, positions in direct relation to one another, and the associate interests that underlie and dispose action" (Barnett and Duvall 2005: 18).

Intersubjective norms, rules, and discourses make international ordering "sticky," or resistant to change, and gives ordering processes constitutive and regulatory effects, licensing forms of agency and defining legitimate types of action. Scholars who, in one way or another, underscore institutionalization tend to also understand international order as spatially and temporally more encompassing than other IPS scholars. These views that emphasize the centrality of institutionalization to international orders contrast markedly with approaches that see ordering either as social network interactions or bounded and localized practices. For instance, rather than social institutions consisting of intersubjective rules, norms, and practices, network scholars delineate "nested relational configurations," focusing on their relative density and consistency (or sparsity or fragmentation).

Before turning to the conclusions, we would like to say a few words about the seeming absence of feminist scholarship in debates on international order. To our knowledge, there are few feminist interventions expressly addressing questions of "international order" as such (on this point, see Sjoberg's chapter on gender and order in this volume). Furthermore, there are hardly any IPS attempts to write about international order in terms of "global patriarchy" or an "international gender line." In our reading, feminist accounts instead enter into international order scholarship in two main ways. One set of scholars center some international ordering process such as capitalism or imperialism and examine how transnational dynamics of gender (and race/class/sexuality) are integral to these processes. In her excellent chapter on gender and order in this volume, Laura Sjoberg discusses such approaches as scholarship on "gendered orders," that is orders in which gender supplements an organizing principle deemed to be primary. For instance, Zillah Eisenstein's *Global Obscenities: Patriarchy, Capitalism and the Lure of Cyberfantasy* locates gender in global capitalism and "sets out to theorize globalized consumer capital in its racialized/sexualized underbelly" (Eisenstein 1998: 1). Eisenstein's account is one of a global order that is at once hierarchical and dispersed and whose central engine seems to be a capitalism that is racialized, sexualized, and gendered.

Sjoberg contrasts scholarship on gendered orders with scholarship on "gender orders," that is orders structured around gender as a primary organizing principle (see her chapter in this volume). In our view, this group of feminist scholars generally aligns more closely to order scholars who insist on the site-specific, contextual, and multiple character of orders. The insistence that gender is emergent, always fluid, and contradictory, and that it only takes temporary form in contextual intersections with, for example, race, class, and sexuality—which are also emergent and fluid—would be difficult to reconcile with more spatially and temporally encompassing notions of order. Indeed, feminist critiques of attempts to speak of a singular international order in terms of a somewhat coherent "global patriarchy" would likely be massive. At the same time,

accounts that insist on a multitude of shifting gender fragments are vulnerable to the counter-argument that such accounts might be so wedded to fluidity and contradiction that they miss more structural gender inequalities that connect and are reproduced across time and space.

Conclusion: Avenues for further research on order

The scholarship that falls within the scope of IPS is voluminous, and much of this work engages the question of international order. This makes the task of surveying IPS writings on order particularly challenging. Our approach has been ambitious: we have conceived IPS broadly, even though a narrower focus on IPS as a critical theoretic project would have made our task simpler. But it is only through taking this broader view that we have been able to draw out the diversity of IPS perspectives on international order, as well as some key axes of debate and principal fault lines that characterize this literature.

This is more than a valuable mapping exercise. We believe these broader differences on fundamental questions about order should be brought to the fore so that new conversations and debates are fostered. Like IR more generally, IPS scholarship on order tends to fracture into theoretical and epistemological "camps," (Sylvester 2007, 2013), "with most thinking done within camps rather than across them" (Sylvester 2013: 611). These camps are not only visible in the way puzzles and arguments about international order are crafted but also in citation practices, publication venues, the composition of workshops and conference panels, and more. More conversations across camps might, in our view, lead to productive tensions, forcing scholars to think even more carefully about analytical blind spots and challenges in their conceptualizations and empirical depictions of order. To the extent that this chapter serves as an introduction for those new to debates about order in IPS, it may also encourage new eyes to see possible points of convergence or fruitful tensions between perspectives that may not have been in much conversation, with novel opportunities for clarifying contrasts, points of synthesis, and possible bridge-building.

For instance, scholars who assume international order to be a singular order would be well served in engaging and taking seriously the rich bodies of scholarship that contend that orders must be understood in plural terms and from multiple positionalities. Likewise, all scholarship on order should be able to defend their claims—theoretically and empirically—against counter-arguments about order as an illusive and power-laden ideological quest that masks the radical diversity and constantly changing nature of social life. On the other hand, many IPS accounts that insist that social life consists of a fluid multitude of localized practices need to better address the counter-charge that such accounts mask patterned hierarchies and spatially and temporally sustained power relations that cohere into international orders. In our view, conversations across camps

might also lead to more developed intersectional or multidimensional analyses of international orders.

We have surveyed the IPS scholarship on international order at an historical moment when debates about the future of international order—in particular, the so-called "liberal" international order—enjoy heightened public attention, drawing in policymakers, media commentators, civil society actors, and academics. Within these public debates, international order is understood in a particular way: it is an order of sovereign states, held together by institutionalized rules and norms and related to ideas of (il)legitimate relations, agency, and political action. Within these parameters, there is immense scope for disagreement: about the sources of order, about what the rules and norms are (or should be), about the normative value of the liberal order, and about what desirable paths of change might be.

Yet, there is a recognizable "folk" conception of order within these debates, and it is a conception that resonates with some strands of IPS but not others. IPS scholarship that gives the state center stage, sees international order as singular (or legibly fragmented into regional orders), conceives it as a social structure (especially an institutionalized structure), and entertains its normative value (in certain forms, under certain conditions) more readily with the terms of public debate. By and large, the critical theoretic strands of IPS scholarship on order eschew these terms and would argue that those strands that resonate with folk understandings—and, at times, deliberately engage public debates—are not just theoretically incorrect but politically complicit with prevailing modes of global ordering. The more mainstream accounts, in turn, have, by and large, done little to engage the interventions by more critical strands, having thus continued to sideline critiques of the legitimacy and accuracy of hegemonic accounts of liberal order. A more fruitful path ahead, but one beyond the scope of this chapter, would be to excavate the different political standpoints that animate different strands of IPS scholarship on international order so as to encourage engagement and debate. Such a project would almost certainly highlight diverse and contending practices of political critique and public engagement.

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CHAPTER 20

RULE IN GLOBAL POLITICS

JORG KUSTERMANS

INTRODUCTION

To examine the phenomenon of rule in relation to the question of international order is to draw attention to how international order is anchored in particular actors or social groups—or at least that international order is assumed or perceived to be anchored in them. Rule connotes pre-eminence, privilege, and leadership. Rule is necessarily assumed by someone or some few. Rulers rule, more or less competently and more or less legitimately. Rulers rule, that is, for better or worse and with more or less impact on the course of human affairs.

In order to clarify the dynamics of rule, which involves the relationship between those who rule and those who are ruled, this chapter proceeds in four steps. First, I attempt to determine the conceptual particularity of "rule." In the anglophone study of International Relations, Nicholas Onuf (with Frank Klink 1989) has proposed rule as a translation for Max Weber's notion of *Herrschaft*. A closer look at that notion's conceptual history clarifies what rule is about and how one might relate it to cognate concepts such as power, governance, and authority. Second, I try to account for the apparent stability of rule. Why is it that a small number of actors—a small number of states in international society, particular social groups in domestic society, particular families in local and national communities—appear to remain in a position to rule, often over decades, and certainly across generations, while others, much more numerous, never seem to reach that position? Third, I draw attention to a less commonly acknowledged aspect of rule. While rule may appear stable when looked at from a distance or when looked at from the position of those who are ruled, it does not always feel that way "in the moment" or to those who rule. Rulers doubt the reality of their authority. Any comprehensive account of rule must make mention of the sometimes overwhelming insecurity of rule and gauge its effects, which include practices of justification and ritualization.

Rule characterizes political society at any level of complexity or aggregation, including international relations. The formal anarchy of international society does not imply the absence of rule (Onuf and Klink 1989). In a fourth section, I focus on *colonial rule*, a common occurrence in world history, now generally associated with European

colonialism and its inhumanities (Osterhammel 1997; Ferro 1994). Building on the theoretical insights of the earlier parts of the chapter, which I summarize in eight theses about rule, I describe how the dynamics of rule took shape and developed in Europe's colonial project. In the conclusion, finally, I make explicit how the very basic assumptions of all International Political Sociology—historicity, relationality, and intersubjectivity—have found reflection in my account of rule in the current chapter.

What is rule?

Rule describes a situation in which one or more actors, or one or more categories of actors, enjoy dominance over other actors. The rulers command, while the ruled obey (or risk suffering the consequences when they do not). The rulers decide on how and to what purpose to organize their environment, while the ruled help accomplish those goals more or less willingly. The rulers establish rules, while the ruled live by them. The rulers choose to acknowledge or ignore societal challenges, and the ruled enjoy or suffer the consequences of these choices. It ought to be born in mind, in this regard, that in all of these formulations, rule describes a theoretical ideal. In most actual instances of rule, the ability to command or to organize the environment is incomplete. In theory, rulers rule the ruled. In practice, they do too—*rule should not be dismissed as a chimera*—but less comprehensively then the notion implies. When rule does become absolute, the result is dystopic (Gleason 1984). Strong but incomplete rule may well be a precondition for society to flourish, but absolute, totalitarian rule suffocates social orders. One might read the fate of the Soviet Union, both domestically and in its sphere of influence, as an illustration of the consequences of absolute rule.

The face of rule has evolved over time. Macro-historically, the trend has been to move from a model of personal rule to one of impersonal rule. Consider the etymology and conceptual history of *Herrschaft*. About the original uses of that term, Reinhard Koselleck and colleagues (1982: 2) observed that "it always concerned a specific lord (*Herr*), that lord's rights and his sphere of influence, be he village lord, city lord, land lord, court lord or sovereign." *Herrschaft* attached to a specific person, much in the same way that in Renaissance Italy *lo stato* attached to a particular person (Skinner 1989). At that time, it described the "status" or prominence of the prince and not the political community or the governmental apparatus more generally. So also with *Herrschaft*. Gradually, however, *Herrschaft* was reconceptualized in more impersonal terms, which enabled such conceptual innovations as *Kapitalherrschaft* (the rule of capital) and also (although less extremely) "colonial rule." This trend has been well documented, although it should be observed that conceptualizations of rule appear to resist the process of de-personalization. Discussions of *Kapitalherrschaft*, for instance, have a knack to at least also include a discussion of the figure of "the boss," and accounts of colonial rule would be incomplete without making reference to the figure of

the colonial governor or officer (Sennett 1980: 50–83; Misra 2008; Koselleck et al. 1982: 83–86). And it can then further be noted that this resistance to the de-personalization of rule characterizes not only theoretical analyses of the phenomenon but also people's practical engagement with the phenomenon. At least in the German context, the more *Herrschaft* came to be attached to an apparatus, and thus no longer to particular *Herren*, the more a desire developed to re-personalize rule, romantic though that impulse may have been. This is at least part of the context in which the figure of the *Führer* emerged (and in which a good part of the German people came to express loyalty to their *Führer*) (Koselleck et al. 1982: 94–98). While it may be feasible to develop a fully impersonal concept of power—as per Foucault's (2003) injunction to cut off the king's head—this does not seem possible to the same extent for the concept of rule.

Other than revealing a trend toward an increasingly impersonal conceptualization of the phenomenon, the conceptual history of rule also shows rule to be an intrinsically normative practice. It is only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that a value-neutral analysis of rule was first attempted, most prominently in the sociology of Max Weber (2019: 338–447). Until that time, any theoretical account of rule, bar possibly that of Machiavelli (2008) in *The Prince*, was first and foremost an account of good rule and the goodness of rule or about bad rule and the badness of rule. In earlier times, the assumption was typically that some kind of rule was either natural or beneficial and that *Herrschaft* was a right of the *Herr*. Simultaneously, rulers were summoned to exercise their rule in an appropriate way, with concern for the common good or with due consideration for the welfare of their servants or subjects. Rule was subject to criticism, and thinkers thought about how best to exercise (personal) and organize (impersonal) rule, but they did not often put into question the value of rule as such. This changed with the gradual ascendancy of natural law thinking and its postulate that all human beings are fundamentally equal. Socio-linguistically, these developments led to new rules of address, with a French glossary explaining in 1721 about the title *monsieur* that it was now appropriate to address a person as *monsieur* "*quand il est de condition égale, ou peu inférieure*" (cited in Koselleck et al. 1982: 62). But if everybody is a *Herr*, then surely nobody is a *Herr* anymore. With the broader use of the title, it eventually lost its significance. It stopped implying the privileges of *Herrschaft*. In the field of political theory, a parallel change occurred, which might be said to have culminated in Marx's vision of a classless society, which implied the "*Aufhebung der ganzen alten Gesellschaftsform und der Herrschaft überhaupt"* (cited in Koselleck et al. 1982: 83). In a less radical version, one had theorists advocating for various forms of democratic rule, whereby the ruled would rule themselves or where they would be ruled by law. In terms of its assumed normative value, that is, the ascendancy of modern natural law thinking led to a thoroughly skeptical attitude about rule (Furedi 2013).

To the extent that most of us are heirs to this line of thought, many will share that skepticism. However, to the extent that one thinks along more traditional lines (that while rule may not be natural, it will generally be functional and therefore desirable),

one may judge such generalized skepticism unwarranted. Sociological accounts of rule cannot settle these issues, but they ought to be aware of rule's essentially normative (and, as a consequence, also contested) nature.

The stability of rule

When Machiavelli wrote *Il Principe*, in which he dispensed advise to rulers about how to achieve and maintain their pre-eminence, he was writing from the assumption that rule was personal and unstable. Even when exercised in a fair and just manner, but the more so when not, rule breeds discontent and jealousy. Disgruntled subjects rebel. Envious rivals conspire to overthrow the ruler. Those who are jealous ally with those who are dissatisfied. The result is constant competition and fundamentally unstable rule. This was Machiavelli's world, or at least the way that Machiavelli imagined the world. It was a world in which it made sense to contend that "it is better [for rulers] to be feared than loved" but simultaneously to warn that there is no surer exit from power than to be hated (Machiavelli 2008: 57–59). One finds a similar way of imagining the world among those scholars who examine the fate of US power from a political realist perspective. Among them, a debate unfolded about the stability or instability of US hegemony. Some participants in that debate worried about the stability of US hegemony, not least because of recurrent and ever more vocal expressions of anti-Americanism (Katzenstein and Keohane 2007). However, other participants would insist on, and typically also found comfort in, the United States' lead in the development of coercive technologies. "Even though the United States' economic dominance has eroded from its peak," they explained, "the country's military superiority is not going anywhere" (Brooks and Wohlforth 2016: 91), and therefore felt confident to declare the United States to be the "Once and Future Superpower." That privileged access to fear-inspiring coercive capabilities has historically served to stabilize rule is a point well taken. But still, from the original Machiavellian perspective, hate could easily trump fear to render personal forms of rule unstable. In a Machiavellian world, military dominance does not ensure stable rule. In a Machiavellian world, that is, rule remains unstable even when military superiority seems to have been secured indefinitely.

Machiavelli thinks of a rule in personal terms, as exercised and enjoyed by a blood-and-guts ruler. But as noted above, rule has witnessed a process of im-personalization. Many researchers in International Political Sociology appear to think of rule in these more impersonal terms. In the world as they imagine it, it is categories of people that rule. *Men* rule—enacting masculine domination (Bourdieu 1998; Sjoberg 2017). *White people* rule—perpetuating colonial domination (Yao and Delatolla 2021; Nisancioglu 2020). The *creative class* rules—a next episode in the rule of capital (Florida 2004). And also, at once most obviously and most slyly, *states* rule—the preponderance of the United States being a distraction of rule by states more generally (Onuf 2013: 206–

218). This is an important shift of perspective, not least because it leads to a different assessment of the stability of rule. Whereas Machiavelli deemed (personal) rule essentially unstable, international political sociologists explain that (impersonal) rule is awfully stable.[1] Men have been ruling forever, it seems. White people somehow manage to cling to their power. The creative class continues to set the societal agenda, even though many of their ilk have only precarious professional employment. And states remain the main global governors, in spite of the demise of the state having been foretold numerous times. Certainly, from the study of global history, we know that all contemporary social arrangements emerged at a certain time and are bound to evolve and disappear eventually, but this does not invalidate the contention that configurations of (impersonal) rule can be, and often are, remarkably stable. Historical truisms do little to change that fact or our experience of it.[2] Along these lines, Vincent Pouliot observes that "the occurrence of fragile and short-lived domination is not what a cursory look at the historical record suggests. To be sure, hierarchies do come and go over long periods of time, but much less often than [a presumption of instability would lead one to expect]" (Pouliot 2017: 121). "The room for resistance," he adds, "is … always contained in practice; its actualization, however, remains rather extraordinary" (Pouliot 2017: 132). In the same vein, Nicholas Onuf wrote in an early, now classic contribution to constructivist scholarship, that "when hegemonial and hierarchical relations are mutually supporting, …, [episodes of rule] may be extended for considerable periods of time" (Onuf 2013: 197).

If impersonal forms of rule—that is, asymmetrical social arrangements marked by relations of domination and subordination among different strata of society, with those in the dominant stratum having the capacity, to a large extent, to direct the further evolution of that social arrangement (on "directiveness" as an aspect of rule, see Onuf 2013: 4–5)—are remarkably stable, they are, nonetheless, not to be considered natural occurrences. Social arrangements are a continuous practical accomplishment. Some degree of effort goes into their maintenance, typically taking the form of (i) the decreeing of rules and (ii) the articulation of (ideological and cultural) discourses, but the effort is rendered rather less burdensome through (iii) the inscription of positions of dominance and subordination in peoples' bodies.

Those who rule decree rules—accompanied with sanctions for deviance and rewards for compliance—in order to secure their dominance

In *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations*, Nicholas Onuf insisted that rule manifests and maintains itself by way of rules. He wrote that "rules transform into rule, and rule into rules" (Onuf 2013: 29).[3] Under conditions of democratic rule, everybody is supposed to be involved in the practice of ruling and thus to be a co-creator of the rules that obtain and by which they are affected. This is an ideal—although conservative thinkers have always worried

about the capacity of "the mob" or "the many" to legislate wisely and thus about the merit of the democratic ideal (Femia 2001). From a sociological perspective, however, the more relevant observation to make is that ideal-typical democratic rule hardly ever applies. Not everybody that is affected by a particular set of rules is actually involved in the process of making the rules. Political society itself decides who is part of its everybody and who is not. Plenty of people are excluded, and those who are included are bound to decree rules that benefit them more than those who are excluded. Just think of trade unions today and how difficult it is for them to protect the interests of nonmembers that are working in precarious, late-capitalist employment. Another problem is, to quote a famous aphorism, that while "all animals are equal, some are more equal than others," even in democratic societies. Socio-economic inequalities have a decisive impact on political influence. The stronger one's socio-economic position, the more one will be able to leverage material and symbolic resources in the struggle for change and continuity. This is how dominant strata in society manage to impose rules—formal rules such as property rights or the veto of the permanent members in the Security Council, but also more informal rules such as fashion and cultural taste—that apply to all equally but still favor the dominant stratum and secure its continuing dominance (Onuf 2013: 214). The process is one of "social closure," to which end (heteronomous) rule-making is a key instrument (Weber 2019: 492; Viola 2020). One implication of this line of argument is that one should be careful not to dissociate the "rule of law" or the establishment of a "rules-based order" too readily from rule by an elite (Kratochwil 2011: 126–150).

Those who rule articulate discourses that naturalize their pre-eminence

Rules are concrete (e.g. "The territorial integrity of states must be respected"; "No caps, hats or head scarfs are allowed inside the class room"; "Black people should sit in the back of the bus"; "Thou shalt not have strange gods before me").[4] As such, they are an attractive target for those who oppose rule. Fighting concrete rules holds the promise of relatively quick successes. But they are tactical successes that do less than one might hope to dislodge existing, asymmetric social arrangements. They annoy those who rule, but they do not pose a fundamental threat to them. The reason is that rule is sustained not only by concrete rules but also by more diffuse discourses. Those who dominate get to articulate the dominant discourses and thus also the general understandings that suffuse and give shape to the social order. They get to articulate categories, distinctions, and metaphors that have a determining influence on how people think about the world and about possible courses of action in that world. Discursive categories and distinctions (certainly in political discourses, directly related to questions of rule) are charged with political and often also moral significance (Derrida 1992). To give a classic example, which speaks to the phenomenon of patriarchal rule: It is not simply the case that dominant discourses about gender relations make a

distinction between men and women. They further propose that men are more fit to rule than women, say because they are more reasonable or more courageous (Beard 2017). Note further that by defining what it is possible to think and do, discourses also necessarily define the limits of what it is possible to think and do (Dunn and Neumann 2016). In this way, discourses determine what kind of change is thinkable, and it should not be a surprise that dominant discourses will typically not make it possible to envision the type of change ("radical change") that would imply the end of the dominance of the dominant.

None of this is to argue that recessive or resistant discourses do not exist—they always do (Dunn and Neumann 2016: 43–82). However, one should not underestimate the capacity of dominant discourses to coopt elements of resistant discourses—witness, for instance, the "local turn" in liberal peacebuilding (Ejdus 2018). And neither should one forget the Foucauldian premonition that the successful resistance to domination will not lead to the end of domination *as such* but merely to the substitution of a new form of domination for the old one. In this view, when a discourse does not serve to preserve the pre-eminency of those who rule, it will serve to install a new set of people in a position of dominance—by proposing a new set of categories and distinctions, equally charged with moral and political significance.

Those who rule and those who are ruled habitually comport themselves in ways that confirm their status: The social order and peoples' place in it is written into their bodies

Dominant discourses are resilient, which renders rule stable. However, because discourses are linguistic constructs, they still suffer from the unreliability of all social achievements that find support foremost in linguistic action. Roy Rappaport (1999) famously explained that language is ultimately unreliable as a means of rule; a first reason being that the very idea of language implies the possibility of lying and thus also of a dominant discourse being exposed as deceptive or even false; and a second reason being that language—certainly complex language use such as ours—affords the articulation of alternative political visions and thus to transcend, at least in theory, the current order of things. As mentioned before, the political discourse of society is rarely, if ever, monolithic. Dominant discourses are always flanked and often contested by recessive and resistant discourses. This is possible—inevitable even—due to the very nature of discourses as linguistic constructs. Discourse functions as a powerful prop to rule, but it is far from failproof.

The dominant stratum in a political society does not depend on the decreeing of rules or the articulation of discourses only.[5] The work that rules and discourses are meant and seen to do for them is greatly facilitated by what Bourdieusians call "habitus," which Bourdieu defined as "a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which

generate and organize practices and representations" (Bourdieu 1990: 53; for an exposition of the concept, see Leander 2010). What this come down to is that social statuses are rooted in people's very bodies. Through a continuous and largely undeliberate process of socialization, people develop a deep familiarity with the world and their position within it. They develop a "sense of place" in the social topography and an instinctive (and inarticulate) feel for how they must navigate the world from the place that they occupy. As a result of having lived through a different set of experiences, each person's habitus will be different from that of another person. At the same time, people who share a certain social position will share a fair number of experiences and will therefore develop a similar habitus, similar cultural tastes, and similar ways of bodying forth, also in the political realm. Members of dominant groups will generally—remember that habitus denotes a "disposition," not a determination—feel more at ease to take the word and take the lead in public deliberations than members of nondominant groups. In the vicinity of those who rule, those who are ruled assume a humble posture (Pocock 1976). They will approach those who rule with trepidation, adulation, or sullen acceptance, in each case expressing their subordinate position. They leave the initiative to those who dominate, in this way reaffirming the validity of the existing "pecking order" (Pouliot 2016). And they do so mainly because they do not *feel* that they could do otherwise. These kinds of embodied dispositions, which world-political actors develop too, play an important role in keeping rule stable. They underlie the efficacy of rules and discourses and further explain why even the successful introduction of new rules and new discourses does not automatically imply the discontinuation of existing configurations of rule.

The insecurity of rule

The political discourse about rule is inevitably a normative discourse. Even when it is maintained that some form of rule is natural and desirable, discourses about rule will insist that it matters how rulers rule—competently, responsibly, for the common good, with restraint, responsively, bound by rules, courageously, et cetera. There is a whole vocabulary that people deploy to summon rulers to cultivate the right set of dispositions (or virtues) to rule well. Obviously, the political discourse about rule would not have this normative bent if the practice of rule did not commonly fail to meet such standards. It is a regular historical occurrence that those who are ruled observe those who rule—both specific rulers and the ruling classes more generally—and feel apprehension. Partly, this will be due to a failure to deliver on the overall promise of rule (most fundamentally: to establish a situation of orderliness, to install and maintain a rule-governed environment, to punish those who transgress common rules and communal mores, to keep at bay and manage chaos-inducing contingencies), despite genuine effort. But partly also it will be due to the fact that those who rule do not necessarily rule for

the common good or with the right mixture of courage and restraint. The ruled expect politically virtuous rulers. Frequently, they expect morally virtuous rulers too, ill considered though that expectation may be.[6]

The problem is, however, that the more rule is stable, and thus the more rule becomes an embodied habit, the more there is a chance that rule will get to be tainted by "the arrogance of power" and the presupposition that those who rule are not bound, and should not be bound, by the same set of constraints or the same morality than those who are ruled (for a reflection on the arrogance of power, see Shlaim 2015). What is more, those who dominate accept (moral) transgressions from their peers that they would not tolerate from the masses. They assume and benefit from a form of aristocratic privilege (for the conceptual coupling of rule and privilege, see Onuf 2013). They develop a sense of entitlement. They indulge in bouts of decadence. They revel in a feeling of impunity. They know themselves to be privileged and act accordingly.[7] Notwithstanding the normative bent of discourses about rule and the consequent expectation of virtuous rulers, this sense of impunity is not without ground. An important reason is that while those who are ruled do feel apprehension at the sight of their rulers' transgressions, the impunity of the ruling classes simultaneously fascinates them. The political fantasy of those who are ruled is not necessarily one of a world without rule but of a world in which they (or at least they *too*) rule, enjoy the sensation of power, and immerse themselves in the pleasures of decadence. As a result, those who rule can get away with more than one would expect on the basis of the moral disapproval that they suffer.

Rulers are privileged. They arrogate to themselves the right to engage in conduct that they do not tolerate from those they rule. More generally, rulers become habituated to their dominant position. They develop a corresponding habitus. Rule comes naturally to them. And yet, the historical record also includes evidence of a certain insecurity experienced by those who rule. When they are challenged directly, or more fiercely than usually, those who rule may feel materially or politically insecure. But even when they are not challenged directly, or are challenged at a moderate level only, rulers may still feel insecure. At such moments, they experience a more fundamental type of insecurity, a more psychologically grounded insecurity. In Brent Steele's astute formulation, "[the most powerful actors] perceive their supremacy to be under constant challenge," even when it is not, or at least not seriously. He explains that they experience "aesthetic insecurity," an insecurity about appearances (Steele 2010: 1). The powerful read and listen to folk tales too when they are growing up. They know that the common folks are prone to ridicule the vanity of the elite. They know that the common folks are prone to observe that "the emperor has no clothes" (Andersen 2008).[8] This knowledge fosters aesthetic insecurity. They worry about how they appear to others, especially their supposed subordinates.

Additionally, the powerful are typically well educated. They have learned about the classics of political theory, from which they know that rule is supposed to be legitimate,

that rule will be more stable when it is legitimate, that it will be more stable when it is acknowledged as authority.[9] But the trouble for rulers is that they can never quite know whether those who are ruled actually recognize the legitimacy of their rule. The mere fact of compliance or obedience is not a sufficient indication, because obedience can be a façade hiding contempt. As a result, those who rule know that they dominate, but they do not know, and they cannot know, and they know that they cannot know, whether they are vested with genuine authority. The reality of rule is often beyond doubt, but the same does not apply to the reality of authority (Kustermans et al. 2022). Quite the contrary. This amounts, especially for those with a ruler's habitus, to a condition of "ontological insecurity," even when the way in which they strut about indicates otherwise. Aesthetic performances, that is, can serve to cloak ontological insecurity. Overly explicit or exacting demands for loyalty and gratitude, on the other hand, reveal the ontological insecurity of those who dominate. They reveal the insecurity that is intrinsic to the very situation of rule. The material and political insecurity of rulers (and the ruling classes) is contingent on circumstances. But the ontological insecurity of rulers (and the ruling classes) is baked into their very position of pre-eminence.

Insecurity is not a condition in which people or polities like to dwell. When they face threats to their physical security, they will invest in a physical defense system. When they face threats to their ontological security, people and polities invest in an ontological defense system. Some things function to both effects: walls, for instance (Br own 2017; Ejdus 2017). People put up a wall and feel more secure, both materially and psychologically. They feel as though they have restored their sovereignty. As such, to the extent that sovereignty is at the core of modern polities' identity, putting up a wall strengthens their ontological security (Mitzen 2006). However, the ontological security of rulers does not fully coincide with the ontological security of the polity overall. Therefore, it makes sense to try to determine what rulers do when they are faced with threats to their ontological security *qua* rulers. What do rulers do when they grow insecure about how those who are ruled assess their authority?

Theorists have come up with a number of plausible ideas. Some contend, for instance, that those who rule, when faced with ever more vocal opposition, will put extra effort into justifying their exercise of rule. They will engage in an intensified effort at discursive legitimation, explaining how their conduct and policies align with communal standards and that they act in pursuit of the common good. Or, when the challenge to their authority persists, and a mere discursive effort does not appear to suffice, they may actually act responsively, alter their behavior, and change their policies (Zürn 2018). Other theorists hold a less wishful view. They explain that ontologically insecure rulers will seek to impress their authority on others by way of spectacular endeavors (Musgrave and Nexon 2018; Butt 2019). They may launch a punitive attack on a resistant country (Melos, Iraq) or launch a space mission to the moon. They showcase their superior ability. During such moments, whatever misgivings they previously entertained about those who rule, those who are ruled cannot do much

more than stand by, stand in awe, and stand corrected. However, the trouble is that spectacular endeavors of this kind might have subordinate expressing deference in the short run, but they do not ensure legitimacy in the longer run. The spectacle makes an impression, but it equally risks terrifying those who witness it. As suggested earlier, it is not uncommon for us to both admire and fear people with superior abilities. And the same applies to classes with superior resources and polities with superior capabilities. Spectacular performances confirm that superiority but, ultimately, have little effect on how much legitimacy lesser people attribute to their rulers.

It is not surprising, therefore, that rulers also take recourse to ritual—beautiful rather than sublime, but more effective in the long run. In contrast to spectacular performances, ritual entails the possibility of having those who are ruled participate and thus to feel that they have a stake in the social order that the ritual expresses and solidifies. Ritual is joint ritual—at least potentially, but some say by definition, the notion of an audience being alien to the practice of ritual, at least in this view (Alexander 2004). Common folks join religious processions, flanking the clergy and town notables. Similarly, the leaders of small states participate in international summits, where they get to stand by the side of, maybe talk to, or even share a meal with the leaders of more powerful countries. Occasions such as these are clearly ceremonial events, often organized and orchestrated by those who rule. Letting those who are ruled—or least some of those who are ruled, their elite—participate in them plays a major part in the process of legitimating rule and of soothing rulers' ontological insecurity. In such moments, when they move their bodies in tandem, there is a good chance—but never certainty—that both rulers and the ruled will *feel* rule to be authoritative (Kustermans et al. 2022).

Colonial rule, for instance

The concept of rule, it should be clear by now, is a rich notion that serves to get a handle on a complicated political relation. Thus far, I have developed my argument about what the notion entails mainly in theoretical terms, standing on the shoulders of a number of prominent theorists of rule and making reference to an unruly set of examples. But I believe it would be appropriate to bring some of these claims and arguments to bear on a particular category of rule in global politics. To that end, I have distilled from the foregoing discussion eight theses about the nature, stability, and insecurity of rule and will show, for each one of them, how it found manifestation in the phenomenon of colonial rule.

Thesis 1

Rule has been evaluated steadily more negatively since the arrival of modernity. It did not evoke so much or such deep-rooted suspicion in earlier times.

Most people who study European colonialism find it difficult to find merit in the project, and rightly so. European colonialism was premised on the appropriation and exploitation of natural resources, tended to treat colonial subjects as means rather than ends, and did lasting damage to the social fabrics of colonial societies. As a result, European colonialism became a source of anger (for the colonized) and shame (for the colonized and colonizers alike) (Wright 1956). However, although gradually the very idea of colonialism was discredited, certainly in the eyes of those subject to colonial rule, this was not necessarily the case at the outset. In the earliest stages of their endeavors, colonial actors often entered political spaces in which multiple rulers competed for authority and, to an extent, accepted the Europeans as both trading partners and political allies. That these "foreign" actors eventually seized power was not necessarily frowned upon by local people, at least not originally. Most political societies that Europeans came to colonize had a history of foreign rule—Mughal rule in India, for instance —and this was not *ipso facto* a cause for concern, as also the reception of Muslim rule in Andalusia indicates (Ringmar 2019). In and of itself, foreign rule did not have to be a problem. This changed, however, with the introduction of the idea of nationalism (paralleling the idea of the "Self" as a unique individual) in political discourse and its eager embrace, at least partly as a result of colonial *mis*rule, by intellectual elites in colonized societies (Mauss 2018; Go and Watson 2019).

Thesis 2

There are limits to what rule can accomplish. The more rulers respect these limits, the longer rule will endure. The more rulers aspire to absolute rule, the more resistance they will encounter.

The German historian Jürgen Osterhammel (1997) has identified "six epochs" in the development of European colonialism. To the extent that there was a pattern to that development, in addition to the geographical movement from Latin America, to Asia, and then to Africa, it was one of colonial imposition becoming steadily more intense, although the ruthless exercise of control on Caribbean plantations during colonialism's second epoch—from 1630 onwards—had been an early warning of what could lie in store for other colonized regions. Generally, though, during the early stages of colonialism, there was a reluctance on the part of colonizing countries to assume too many governance functions, certainly on territories further away from coastal regions or economically profitable sites. This changed eventually. Colonial rule morphed into colonial governance, for various reasons and at various points in time. In the Spanish case, for instance, the development of a colonial bureaucracy happened relatively quickly as a response to the surprisingly quick collapse of the Aztec and Inca empires and the need "to tame the colonists and conquistadores" that were wreaking havoc in the resulting power vacuum (Osterhammel 1997: 30). The Spanish Crown felt ambivalent about the development. Similarly, the British have been described as "reluctant imperial ists" (Lowe 2001), and also the Belgian state was in doubt about the desirability of

assuming governmental responsibility in Congo when the continuation of Leopold II's reign in the country had become untenable (Ewans 2002). And yet, over time, colonial rule did turn into a type of "developmental colonialism," which entailed "an unprecedented extension of state functions down to the village level" (Osterhammel 1997: 38). Interestingly, this change in colonial ambition was accompanied with more widespread popular support for the anti-colonial struggle. If the mode of rule on plantations in the Caribbean heralded what lay in store for other colonial societies, then so too was the Haitian slave rebellion of 1804 an early warning of what could be expected by colonists that sought to establish comprehensive rule.

Thesis 3

The stability of (personal) rule is forever threatened by jealousy and discontent.

That colonial rule bred discontent among colonial subjects appears from the fact that it gave occasion to anti-colonial struggles. The exploitative nature of the colonial project and the unrestrained power of colonial governors and officers go a long way toward explaining that discontent. To these obvious reasons one can add that local elites in colonial societies acquainted themselves with European political ideas (such as nationalism) and used them to oppose the colonizer (cf. thesis 1) and that the growing intrusiveness of colonial rule brought also the non-elite on board of the protests (cf. thesis 2). Less often observed is the role of envy in driving the colonial project forward. Consider its very beginning, when Spain and Portugal conquered the Americas and had their conflicts in this new world arbitrated by papal authority, with the Treaties of Tordesillas and Zaragoza assigning one part of the non-European world to the Spanish and the other part to the Portuguese. Once Protestants had forced a split from the Catholic church, however, this division became unacceptable to them. They too felt entitled to colonial possessions in the Americas and soon sailed West. They colonized various parts of the continent, occasionally ousting earlier colonial rulers, such as when the Dutch took over control from the Portuguese in the north east of Brazil or the British from the Dutch in present-day New York. One could observe an even more outspoken status-driven dynamic during the so-called "Scramble for Africa"—which had France and Germany envying and wanting to emulate the British Empire (Barnhart 2016). The competition was so intense that it threatened the stability of all of the contenders' rule on the African continent, which motivated them to organize the Partition of Africa in a "civilized" manner at the Berlin Conference of 1885.

Thesis 4

The stability of (impersonal) rule is maintained by means of rules (including sanctions) and discourses.

There is no doubt that colonists used coercive power to establish and maintain control in colonial societies. However, they used law too. This included the invention and

subsequent application of customary law but also the introduction and application of aspects of metropolitan law. This had the dual function of ensuring control and trying to impose European cultural models on colonial subjects. "Colonial governments," writes Sally Engle Merry (1991: 890), "often promulgated regulations concerning land and labor, regulations that frequently extended to specifying conditions of marriage and divorce and patterns of dancing, drinking, and entertainment." As such, she adds (Merry 1991: 891), "law, along with other institutions of the colonial state, transformed conceptions of time, space, property, work, marriage and the state," thus perpetuating privilege (not least by way of property rights) and stabilizing rule (not least through the control of time and the distribution of authority). Legitimating all of these legal interventions was a set of shifting discursive distinctions: a religious distinction between Christians and non-Christians, a cultural distinction between civilization and savagery, and a racial distinction between whites and nonwhites. Associated with these paired distinctions were ideas about rationality and human nature, about intelligence and its distribution, and about the moral duty to pursue wealth and progress and the consequent sinfulness of letting land lay to waste. On the basis of these distinctions and associations, colonialism was justified, at least in principle, as a "gift" to the colonized (for the use of this metaphor in a colonial context, see Mallard 2019).

Thesis 5

The rules and discourses that sustain rule are contestable. But contestation is less frequent than one would think, because rule develops into an embodied condition. In due course, being a ruler and being ruled becomes part of people's habitus. This process of embodiment adds greatly to the stability of rule.

As a theoretical concept, habitus has been developed most elaborately by Pierre Bourdieu. He applied it to the colonial situation too, observing that, at least in French Algeria, a distinct type of subject had emerged, its habitus characterized by fundamental ambiguities, because "[the] patterns of behavior and the economic ethos imported by colonized coexist[ed] inside of each subject with the patterns and ethos inherited from ancestral tradition" (Bourdieu and Sayad 2004: 464; Go 2013). However, this is not the only possible application of the concept in the colonial context. Albert Memmi (2003: 61), for instance, observed that colonists (even when, upon arrival in the colony, they were reluctant to behave as masters are wont to do) soon grew into the habit. It does not take too long to get used to having a servant around and ordering him—one's "boy"—around much as one pleases. Memmi explained how this also applied to non-elite colonists: "what revenge and what pride for a noncolonized small-time carpenter to walk side by side with an Arab laborer carrying a board and a few nails on his head!" (Memmi 2003: 63). Men of humble background—mediocre men, insists Memmi (2003: 94–95)—traveled to their country's colony and all but instantly considered it normal that they would dominate the local people: "They assume such inordinate self-confidence that it makes them dizzy" (Memmi 2003: 91). Reversely, colonial subjects

were prone to internalize a sense of inferiority. Frantz Fanon (2008) called this the "epidermalization" of inferiority. He pointed out that (especially Black) colonial subjects ended up validating the idea of racial hierarchy, thus making nonwhite inferiority not just an assumption of colonial rule but also a psychological reality thereof, which contributed mightily to the stability of colonial domination.

Thesis 6

Rule breeds arrogance. Those who rule tend to arrogate to themselves special privileges, including moral privileges. They are prone to episodes of moral transgression.

That the colonizer was economically, politically, and legally more privileged than the colonized requires no further explanation. However, that they also arrogated to themselves moral privileges, and would regularly tilt in the direction of moral licentiousness, maybe does. The point is best explained with reference to the sexual politics of colonialism, which were premised on an assumption of unrestrained carnality among colonial subjects, both male and female (Stoler 2002; Meiu 2015). Male colonists fantasized about sexual intercourse with local women, about whom they assumed that they would bring sexual pleasures that they could (or dared) not experience in their bourgeois marriages.[10] Extra-marital affairs and extra-marital rape were common, and thus also extra-marital, bi-racial children, although they were rarely, if ever, acknowledged by their progenitors or the authorities (Grégoire 2020). Prostitutes were popular too, with prostitution often sanctioned by the colonial state (Meiu 2015). But at the same time that the Indigenous woman was desired for her alleged carnal sexuality, so too was the Indigenous man feared for that very same reason. There was no bigger worry for the male colonist than for his wife to be raped or to become otherwise sexually involved with a local man; for her to become a victim, that is, of what were imagined to be insatiable and irresistible sexual creatures. The punishment of local men that dared to have sexual intercourse with European women was severe. Sexual license was a moral privilege enjoyed by the male colonizer and by him only.

Thesis 7

Rulers often experience a feeling of ontological insecurity. They know that rule is supposed to be legitimate, but they cannot know how subordinates really feel about them, and fear that they lack authority.

Albert Memmi (2003: 52–53) made this point convincingly in *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. I quote at length:

> It is impossible for [the colonizer] not to be aware of the constant illegitimacy of his status. It is, moreover, in a way, a double illegitimacy. A foreigner, having come to a land by the accidents of history, he has succeeded not merely in creating a place for himself but also in taking away that of the inhabitant, granting himself astounding privileges, to the detriment of those rightfully entitled to them. And this not by virtue of local laws, which in a certain way legitimize this inequality by tradition, but by upsetting the established rules and substituting his own. He thus appears doubly unjust. He is a privileged being and an illegitimately privileged one; that is, a usurper. Furthermore, this is so, not only in the eyes of the colonized, but in his own as well.

This sense of shame on the part of the colonizer, and the concomitant insecurity about his legitimacy, was not a figment of the imagination of anti-colonial elites in colonial societies. It was on ample display in metropolitan society too; witness such novels as Max Havelaar's (2003) *Multatuli* or the debates in the French national assembly about the destruction of the Yuanmingyuan, the summer palace of the Chinese emperor (Ringmar 2013). Not that this led to an immediate call for an end to the colonial project, but it did indicate an awareness among the colonizers of the frailty of their authority (Mallard 2019). Worse still, it raised questions about how much authority there ever had been. Such questions, almost unbearable to entertain, emerged in spite of the self-assuredness of the discourses that served to legitimate the colonial project. Colonizers discoursed confidently but did not escape the ontological insecurity of rule.

Thesis 8

Rulers resort to ritual in order to overcome their ontological insecurity.

How does the colonizer cope with this predicament? He prances. He takes recourse to pomp and circumstance. Albert Memmi's description of the "receptions of délégués from the mother country" captures the dynamic well: "[They] are more like those accorded a head of government than those for a préfet. The least significant trip involves a series of imperious, backfiring and whistling motorcyclists. Nothing is spared to make an impression on the colonized, the foreigner and, possibly, the colonizer himself" (Memmi 2003: 93). This kind of bluster may have been the dominant response to colonial insecurity in Africa, possibly due to the particularly strong division between Black and white that the construction of a rigid racial hierarchy had imposed on colonial society there (Fanon 2004). In other contexts, however, colonizing and colonial actors did take recourse to the joint performance of political ritual. Thus, at an early stage, they would participate in existing diplomatic rituals, if necessary from a subordinate position, in order to establish themselves as legitimate actors in a novel political space (Bennett 2021). At a later moment, they would appropriate local rites—imperial durbars, for instance, which the British orchestrated a number of times in the

course of the nineteenth century to re-legitimize their rule in India (Kustermans et al. 2022). Crucial to these occasions was the participation of local rulers and a local audience. Their participation, unwilling though it may have been, soothed the ontological insecurity of the British Empire and its agents.[11]

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to give an account of rule (in global politics) from the perspective of International Political Sociology. In line with the framework of the introductory chapter, I have assumed rule to be a historical, relational, and intersubjective phenomenon.

- Rule is a historical phenomenon. In general terms, as time evolved, political rule (at least in Western Europe) became more impersonal and lost its positive valuation. The emergence of individualism as a cultural and political ideal contributed a lot to these trends. But notice that these developments must not be permanent. Modern history has more than once witnessed the re-personalization of rule and also the belief that a category of people—say, the well educated—are natural rulers.
- Rule is a relational phenomenon. Rulers cannot rule in the absence of people to rule. To be a ruler means to control people. To be ruled means to be subject to the power of a ruler. More fundamentally, to be a ruler means to make the control over people second nature. And to be ruled often means to express deference habitually. When relations endure, the various positions within that relation become part of people's habitus. There is a slight complication though: rulers depend politically and psychologically on the acknowledgment of the rightfulness of their rule. The ruled can withhold that recognition. This renders rulers less powerful then sometimes they are taken to be. Any particular instance of rule comes to and end when people—either the ruled, or the rulers—stop acting on its premises. But do notice that this is easier said than done.
- Rule is an intersubjective phenomenon. Both ruler and ruled experience rule mediated by rules and discourses. Violence may often lie at the origin of political domination or make possible the transition from the dominance of one to the dominance of another. However, for rule to persist, it must be experienced as meaningful—not necessarily desirable, but certainly meaningful—and this depends on the promulgation of rules and the articulation of discourses. The rulers and the ruled talk rule into existence. And as the recurrent performance of rituals of rule suggests, they dance it into existence too.

The one question that International Political Sociology fails to address explicitly, but which informed most serious thought about rule before the development of modern sociology, is how we ought to evaluate rule, both in general and particular instances of rule. In general, International Political Sociology appears to share modernity's overall skepticism about rule, including "so-called" or "supposed" democratic rule. But if rule is inevitable, this raises the question whether International Political Sociology has the capacity to contribute to normative debates about good rule beyond repeating the pieties of post-Enlightenment thought. Which intellectual resources ought it to mobilize, from within or without, if it were to adopt that ambition? This appears to me to be an important question for future scholarship on rule in global politics.

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Notes

1. The argument that personal rule is less stable than impersonal rule parallels Max Weber's (2019: 337) insight that charismatic authority either comes to an end swiftly or is routinized into traditional or rational-legal authority.
2. What familiarity with broader swaths of history can do, however, is to push back gently against the presumption that stability of rule necessarily implies a certain "heaviness" of rule. Stable rule can be light-handed and must therefore not be experienced as a burden. For an application of the metaphor of "heaviness" to international hierarchies, see Pouliot (2016). For an argument about the light-handedness of, for instance, Qing rule in historical East Asia, see Ringmar (2019).
3. More particularly, Onuf developed an argument about how different forms of rule build on the decreeing of different kinds of rules. Hegemony builds on instruction rules. Hierarchy builds on directive rules. Heteronomy builds on commitment rules. Onuf claims, convincingly, that international relations, to the extent that they unfold in and make for a "political society," are always characterized by a combination of these three pure types of rule (cf. Onuf 2013: 196–227).
4. For an argument to the effect that rules are more concrete, while discourses (or "general understandings") are more diffuse, see Schatzki (2002: 79): "[rules] enjoin, direct, or remonstrate people to perform specific actions."
5. Let's not forget either that those who rule can, and do, resort to threat and the use of force. However, as we know from the work of Hannah Arendt (1954), when the stability of rule is primarily premised on coercive power, it is an apparent stability only. Or, if it is a lasting stability, the rule that results from it will not be satisfying, either to those who rule or to those who are ruled. Mind you, this does not imply that coercive power has no role to play in stabilizing rule or that occasional bouts of expressive violence cannot play a role in revitalizing rule.
6. For a classic discussion of the tension between political and moral virtue, cf. Weber (1946). Another good source is John Pocock's (2016) *The Machiavellian Moment*, especially the chapters that deal with debates in Renaissance Italy about which virtues to cultivate in republican polities.
7. Consider, for instance, the persistent case of sex abuse perpetrated by humanitarian workers, or the bunga-bunga parties organized by former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi. At first sight, humanitarian workers and figures like Silvio Berlusconi have little in common. But there is this one crucial similarity that both are privileged in their respective contexts.
8. The folk tale of the emperor without clothes was recorded by Hans Christian Andersen, but there exist earlier versions too, for instance in Spanish and Persian sources (cf. Bredsdorff 1975).
9. This could be the classics of the modern canon (Hobbes, Locke, Kant), but also the Confucian or Byzantine canon, all of which state that rule ought to be informed and constrained by standards of good rule (cf. Ostrowski 1998).
10. This is a major theme in the novels by Jef Geeraerts, a Belgian colonial-officer-turned-writer, especially in the *Gangreen* series (cf. Geeraerts 2012).
11. As a final example of the ritualistic soothing of colonizers' own misgivings about the colonial situation, consider the half-hearted preparations for self-rule in the context of the mandates and trusteeship systems. I thank Nicholas Onuf for pointing this out.

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CHAPTER 21

SOVEREIGNTY

ARJUN CHOWDHURY

INTRODUCTION

> "When a deer eats the barley, the farmer does not hope to nourish the animal; when a low-born woman becomes the mistress of a noble man, her husband does not hope to get rich on that nourishment." Now the barley is the people, and the deer is the royal power; thus, the people are food for the royal power, and so the one who has the royal power eats the people. And so the king does not raise animals; and so one does not anoint as king the son of a woman born of the people.
>
> "The King Eats the People," *Satapatha Bhramana* 13.2.9 (ancient Hindu text)[1]

Sovereignty, commonly understood to mean ultimate authority (or rule), presents an analytical paradox for International Relations. On the one hand, references to "sovereignty" and "sovereign state" in books have been relatively constant over the past two centuries, suggesting that the concept has enduring relevance (see Figure 21.1).

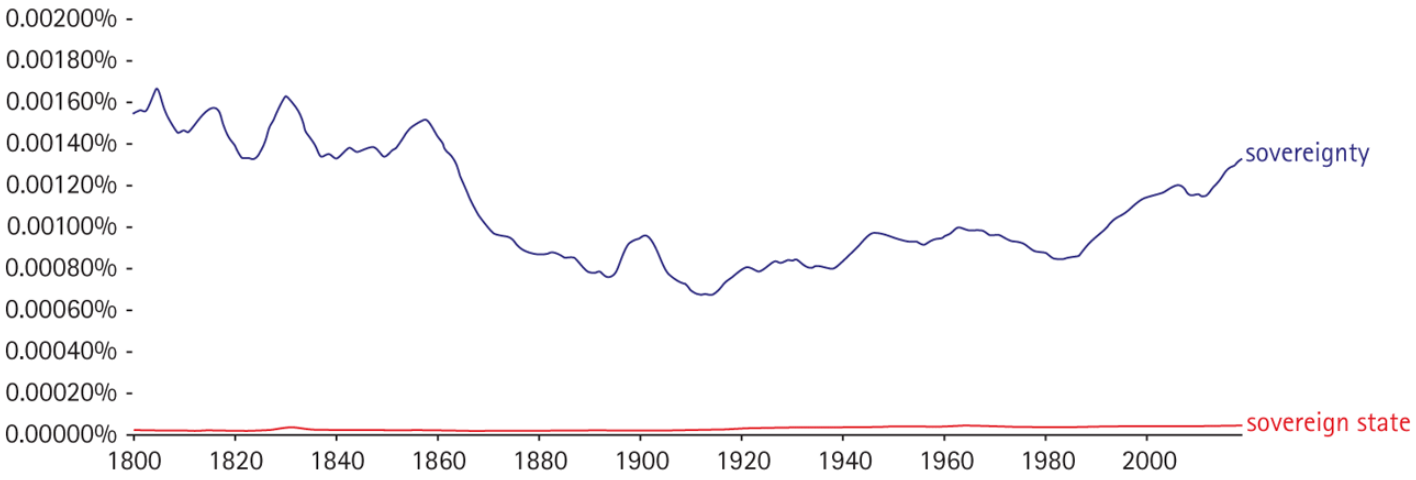

FIGURE 21.1 References to "sovereignty" and "sovereign state" in Google n-gram viewer

On the other hand, the referent itself has changed so much that the concept has been said to be variable to the point of analytical anarchy and practical meaninglessness. This criticism is not new; E. H. Carr called sovereignty "blurred and indistinct" more than five decades ago (Srivastava 2022: 26).

"Sovereignty" refers at one and the same time to the sole or supreme claim to rule within the borders of a polity (the internal dimension of sovereignty) and the recognition of that claim by other rulers, which recognition commits all rulers to not interfere in the

affairs of other rulers recognized as sovereign (the external dimension of sovereignty). Both the internal and external referents have changed over time: once vested in the person of the king, sovereignty is now said to be vested in the people. While empires and other polycentric forms like commercial companies were recognized as sovereign into the nineteenth century (i.e. after the putative origin of the system of sovereign states in 1648), now only a singular authority, the centralized state, is recognized as sovereign for a given territory. Beyond conceptual slipperiness, the practical objection is that rulers have capriciously interfered in the affairs of other rulers nominally recognized as sovereign or revoked that recognition unilaterally (Krasner 1999). If recognized sovereigns are subject to interference or can lose recognition at another's will, they can hardly be said to be sovereign, and if the rules of sovereignty can be abrogated at will, they are not especially consequential as rules.

It follows that the central task for any discussion of sovereignty is to theorize it in a way that can incorporate historical change—to see sovereignty's vaunted complexity as a matter of structure, not noise. In this chapter, I argue that sovereignty should be understood as relational on two dimensions: between ruler and ruled and between rulers. These relationships imply intersubjective understandings that regulate relationships, and, as those intersubjective understandings change over time, sovereignty is historically variable. As scholars have shown empirically, sovereignty is not a static concept or norm. To understand sovereignty requires us to approach it as the editors of this Handbook suggest International Political Sociology (IPS) should be undertaken: sovereignty is relational, intersubjective, and historical. Doing so will illuminate how polities and the international orders within which those polities operate break down. The counter-intuitive implication of this analysis is that the internal and external dimensions of sovereignty are related, but not always positively so: rulers that exercise power may not be recognized as such (and vice versa), and the recognition of rulers affects how they exercise power. That the external and internal dimensions of sovereignty are not always positively related means that while sovereignty is not solely a property of the modern state, neither is it the case that in the absence of the state, there is no sovereignty. Rather, the exercise of sovereignty may make the polity collapse, what in the contemporary moment is called "state failure" but has been referred to differently over time. The destabilizing potential of sovereignty gives us purchase on understanding international orders as "ways of organizing political life" which are, for all their regularity and stability, subject to quite fundamental change.

To make this argument, the chapter is structured in four further sections. The first section lays out a concept of sovereignty that is relational and intersubjective in its internal and external dimensions, but I show how these relationships are vulnerable to dissolution. The second section shows how the internal and external dimensions have changed over time, which requires us to understand sovereignty as historical and study it inductively. The third applies the concept to the peculiar history of Haiti, the first independent polity established by former slaves but which was not recognized as

sovereign by other polities for decades, to show that external and internal dimensions of sovereignty are related, but not positively so. The fourth section concludes.

Sovereignty: Relational, intersubjective

In his seminal theorization of sovereignty in International Relations, Jens Bartelson suggested that sovereignty was simultaneously the concept that was taken to mark the separation between the domestic and the international realm—what I have called the internal and external dimensions of sovereignty—and the origin of that separation itself. Put differently, these two dimensions did not exist prior to the concept of sovereignty, they derive from the concept (Bartelson 1995: 50–51).

The development of this concept of sovereignty as the separation between internal and external realms raises three problems. First, the separation of internal and external dimensions of sovereignty is a modern invention, and to limit our understanding of sovereignty to this concept is to leave out much of world history. To avoid this, Christian Reus-Smit and Ann E. Towns point out, in their lead chapter for this section, that many IPS approaches to international order "relax the sovereignty assumption," which means, in practice to theorize non-Western and pre-modern orders without reference to (implicitly) Westphalian indivisible sovereignty or, as this chapter suggests, develop a different concept of sovereignty. In the Holy Roman Empire, for example, there was more than one claimant to rule within specific territories, and this phenomenon of what Swati Srivastava calls "hybrid sovereignty" continued into the nineteenth century, when commercial companies mobilized armies and signed treaties (Srivastava 2022). Second, within the modern period, rulers within a territory have not always been recognized as such externally, as in the case of Haiti discussed below, or have been recognized and then had that recognition revoked, like Indigenous groups which signed treaties that were then voided without their consent. Third, the modern concept of sovereignty, predicated on a Hobbesian covenant that is designed to end civil strife, does not provide analytical purchase on the breakdown of sovereign entities; a civil war, for example, is treated as a deviation from the functioning of state sovereignty, not a possible result of it. The concept developed in more detail below, which emphasizes as structural the possibility for the ruler to void the covenant, does provide such purchase.

The modern concept of sovereignty would mis-describe much of world history and significant parts of modern world politics. (It would also appear extremely limiting to social theorists who have analyzed sovereignty in these contexts.) Faced with these problems, one might respond that sovereignty is not an analytically or practically helpful concept, and given its state-centric connotations, scholars of IPS *should* "relax the sovereignty assumption." While understandable, this move is too analytically costly. To do so throws out the baby—understanding rule, and international order based on changing understandings of rule—with the (apparent) bath water—sovereignty. Rule and

its breakdown is an enduring phenomenon that precedes the modern concept of sovereignty. Insofar as different forms of rule have underpinned different forms of international order, there have been forms of international order predicated on different concepts of sovereignty. Rule over a territory, even if contested, is not a modern (or European) phenomenon. The recognition between rulers is hardly modern either, because war, trade, and diplomacy preceded the modern period, with important effects on the relationship of the ruler and the ruled. To understand order, one needs a concept of sovereignty that can accommodate its complexity and capriciousness as a matter of structure rather than noise. This is easier said than done: any definition, as Nietzsche said, obscures history; but the history of sovereignty especially would suggest that it has no stable ground or essence to define (Bartelson 1995). If one cannot define sovereignty as a stable property of an unchanging entity, how can one theorize sovereignty rather than just describe it at given moments?

We can do so by stepping back from International Relations and approaching sovereignty in its most basic form: a relationship between rulers and ruled that derives from, at least, the advent of agriculture and the formation of settled societies.[2] The development of agriculture led to surpluses, which had to be protected, requiring a relationship between the farmer and the ruler who committed to protect the farmer in exchange for the surplus (Mann 2012; Scheidel 2017; Scott 2017). This relationship, as the epigraph suggests, was unequal. The ruler lived off the surplus; he did not work the fields and so was dependent on the farmer, who did.[3] And the ruler necessarily possessed more coercive power than the farmer, both before the establishment of rule—if he was not more powerful, there would be no reason for rule—and during it—to allow the farmer to "specialize" in farming (Bates 2008). The farmer's world was one of production and utility, the ruler's world was one of consumption unbounded by concerns of utility (Bataille 1992). Given this inequality, there was always the possibility that the ruler would consume excessively: "the king eats the people."[4] This possibility is mostly absent from theorizations of sovereignty in International Relations (IR), which focus on external recognition or non-interference, and the internal ability to police territory.

The fable suggests that the relationship between ruler and ruled is paradoxical because in its structure is the possibility of dissolution, and this paradox is what characterizes sovereignty. On the one hand, the ruler commits to protecting the ruled, for which he accumulates the means of coercion. On the other, by virtue of that commitment, the ruler is a threat to the ruled. This threat is moderated by legal frameworks that grant rights to the ruled, but the ruler can transgress these frameworks because he is vested with greater coercive power (Chowdhury and Duvall 2014). The relationship between ruler and ruled requires the ruler to recognize the ruled, but the ruler can always withdraw this recognition.[5] Such transgressions (or expectations thereof) can lead to exit or uprising, and so the relationship between ruler and ruled is unstable.[6]

The reader will object that any relationship can be transgressed—a borrower can refuse to pay her debt, for example—so sovereignty is hardly unique in this regard. This

objection has two components, which can be posed as questions. First, how is transgression of a relationship marked by sovereignty different from the transgression of relationships more generally? Second, does any transgression constitute sovereignty? Sovereignty is different from other relationships because there is no higher authority enforcing the relationship, and one party to the relationship is allocated power that always exceeds the other's ability to constrain it. By design, the relationship lacks both third-party enforcement and the constraints on the more powerful party that would render it self-enforcing.[7] The possibility of transgression is structural to the relationship. The question of whether all transgressions constitute sovereignty is more complicated. A transgression might be an act done purely for private gain, like robbery, and if prosecuted effectively, reinforce the ruler's claim to protect the ruled. This violation of the law does not (assuming it is not coordinated with multiple simultaneous robberies) directly challenge the ruler nor lead to the overwhelming of his enforcement capacity. Such crimes would not be acts of sovereignty, suggesting the inverse—direct challenges to the ruler, coordinated acts of transgression—are acts of sovereignty. In practice, this distinction is not always so clear-cut. Consider the following sequence of events: an economic shock forces the ruler to stop paying salaries; soldiers respond by "taxing" citizens themselves in a decentralized fashion; to which citizens mobilize in self-defense against the ruler's forces.[8] The soldiers need aim neither to challenge the ruler nor to coordinate their actions, for the relationship between ruler and ruled may break down anyway. What transgressions are sovereign acts thus depends on whether they challenge the relationship between ruler and ruled.

That the relationship between ruler and ruled always involves the possibility of transgression is the first, relational, aspect of the concept of sovereignty laid out here. As the relationship between ruler and ruled also marks what is internal and external to the relationship, the possibility of transgression attends the establishment of the separation between internal and external. This suggests a second type of relationship, that between the ruler of one realm and the ruler of another. Again, there is no third party compelling recognition: in the absence of world government, this relationship also involves the possibility for one ruler not to recognize the other.[9] Sovereignty, as we have seen, means that recognition can be withheld. As such, the distinction between internal and external realms, such as the former being governed by hierarchy and the latter by anarchy, is not so sharp: sovereignty in either realm involves the possibility of not recognizing the other, whether those ruled domestically or another sovereign internationally.

This suggests another paradox. To recognize another's sovereignty is to acknowledge their right to manage their internal affairs as they see fit.[10] To deny this recognition is to transgress the relationship of rule within that entity, in essence to declare sovereignty over it. The recognition of another's sovereignty is thus a limitation on one's own, in the more capacious and foundational sense of sovereignty. The recent articulation of the *Responsibility to Protect*, which makes sovereignty conditional on whether the ruler respects the human rights of the ruled, is of a piece with the long-running tension in

international law about the conditions under which the relationship between ruler and ruled can be revoked by a foreign actor. Hugo Grotius, on the one hand, said that "the right which the sovereign has over his subjects" was to be measured "by the extent of the will of those who conferred it upon him," but on the other hand, saw sovereignty as conditional on the observation of natural law—cannibals, for example, did not deserve to be recognized as sovereign. In both cases, the denial of recognition responds to the transgression of laws that, as Cicero had said of natural law, were "dispersed to all nations" to regulate the relationship between ruler and ruled.

In that sovereignty implies recognition by others, it is a social phenomenon. There is a second way in which it is a social phenomenon: recognition (and transgression) is predicated on intersubjective understandings of the entitlements of the ruler and the rights of the ruled (these understandings vary over space and time) (Epstein 2013).[11] *The Responsibility to Protect*, for example, implies a particular understanding of the rights of the ruled—human rights—which are to be recognized by rulers, lest the latter be denied recognition by other rulers. As the example suggests, these intersubjective understandings have an existence independent of specific relationships of recognition; the nonrecognition of human rights by particular rulers does not render human rights inoperative, whether in general or in the particular case, as a rubric for understanding and negotiating the relationship between ruler and ruled. (However, acts of transgression can sometimes be generative of new intersubjective understandings that regulate recognition, with older understandings falling by the wayside as rulers and ruled come to recognize each other on different terms. This latter point will be fleshed out in the discussion of the Haitian Revolution below).

Therefore, the internal and external dimensions of sovereignty involve two paradoxes. Internally, sovereignty involves the possibility of not recognizing the ruled, that is to transgress the framework regulating the relationship between ruler and ruled. Externally, sovereignty involves the possibility of not recognizing another ruler as sovereign. These relationships are constituted by the possibility that they may be voided; that is, these relationships are always potentially nonrelationships. That sovereignty can mean both X and not-X might lead scholars to drop such a paradoxical concept. But these paradoxes are inherent to the concept. I have argued that sovereignty has two dimensions—internal and external—both of which have two possibilities—to recognize or not recognize. This leaves us with four combinations, as captured in Table 21.1 below.

Table 21.1 Combinations of recognition and nonrecognition

	External recognition	External nonrecognition
Internal recognition	Sovereign polity	Ruler recognized by ruled internally (exercises authority) but is not recognized by other rulers
Internal nonrecognition	Ruler not recognized by ruled internally (does not exercise authority) but is recognized by other rulers	Colonized people

The table suggests that recognition on both internal and external dimensions of sovereignty does not capture the full range of entities that populate world politics, and so the received approach in IR of sovereignty as the recognition of a ruler who recognizes the ruled and is recognized by other rulers is, at best, partial. Certainly, the sovereign state that exercises rule over its territory and is recognized as such is captured by this framework. But so are other possibilities that appear as anomalies as compared to this disciplinary ideal-type. Historically, the colony where rule is exercised from outside, denying the ruled a relationship with the ruler, has been a common feature of world politics. Less well known, but more interesting for theorizing the effects of sovereignty on world politics, are the two other possibilities. These two possibilities suggest a divergence between the theory of sovereignty, anchored in international law and the separation of internal and external realms, and the practice of sovereignty, a divergence which the more expansive concept of sovereignty presented here can address.

Consider a ruler who establishes rule over a territory but is denied external recognition. Contemporary examples might be the short-lived fate of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) or longer-lived 'de facto' states such as Puntland and Somaliland. These are not new, however. In the next section, I discuss the case of nineteenth-century Haiti, to which we could add the changing recognition of Indigenous peoples, first defined in treaties but then voided. In many cases, these rulers continued to exercise power over their territories during the nineteenth century, as only toward the end of that period was direct conquest possible, but they were not recognized as rulers. I discuss this in greater detail below, but to summarize: their rule was seen as either absent or excessive and so not worthy of recognition.

The final instance is one where the ruler cannot exercise rule but is recognized as such. The contemporary example is the "failed state." But this combination was also common in the medieval and early modern eras when rulers did not exercise much power over rural and peripheral areas. Yet, these rulers recognized a range of other actors, especially signatories to peace treaties, and met in forums like the Imperial Diets that took place in the Holy Roman Empire (Holzgrefe 1989: 19). Rule in such situations is plural and heteronomous, but recognition, even if more widely dispersed than under a system of states, was still consequential. Faced with revolts of peasants facing greater extraction and loss of autonomy in the Peasant's War of the early sixteenth century, princes, imperial cities, and other nobles allied under the aegis of the Habsburgs to coordinate their actions in a way that the peasants could not. This alliance, the Swabian League, comprised a council to adjudicate disputes between members, as well as provide military force against external aggression, internal revolt, or recalcitrant League members. Even in a heteronomous environment, recognition conveyed material advantages relative to those denied recognition (Fabry 2010; Coggins 2014). Having said that, the material value of recognition rises as the units that confer recognition gain material strength: thus, the vast increase in the power of modern states over their predecessors—in 1900, great powers taxed 10 percent of gross domestic product (GDP)

while now they tax 30 percent of GDP—makes recognition by contemporary states more consequential than recognition by prior, weaker polities (Chowdhury 2018). Those who are recognized receive support, of which there is more in historical terms, unavailable to those who are not: Puntland is not eligible for International Monetary Fund (IMF) support but the Central African Republic is.

The reader will note (possibly with consternation!) that the combination of external nonrecognition and internal recognition can coincide in the same territory with external recognition and internal nonrecognition (as in Puntland and Somalia). The two can even be related: insofar as external recognition provides resources, such as financial or military support, for a ruler, this reduces the ruler's need to recognize the ruled and can lead to rebellion. This destabilizing dynamic runs counter to the notion of sovereignty as the coincidence of internal rule and external recognition, as will be detailed in the third section on Haiti. But before that, I turn to how to historicize sovereignty without making it so historically contingent that the phenomena to which the signifier "sovereignty" refers to in different historical moments are incommensurable.

Historicizing sovereignty

The previous section abstracted from history to present sovereignty as a paradoxical relationship. Sovereignty is a relationship between ruler and ruled and between rulers. The paradox is that to be sovereign involves the possibility of transgressing the relationship with the ruled or not recognizing the other ruler. In this section, I briefly discuss the historically variable features that mediate both relationships. Put simply, intersubjective understandings of the relationship between ruler and ruled have changed over time—specifically what constitutes the transgression of that relationship—and with those changes, the conditions under which rulers come to be recognized by other rulers have changed. Analyzing the intersubjective basis of recognition over time leads us, effectively, to historicize sovereignty. Thus, a methodological lesson: to historicize sovereignty (and to historicize more generally as the editors suggest is one of the hallmarks of IPS) requires some level of induction.

As the example of the cannibal who violates natural law suggests, the intersubjective understanding of what constitutes a transgression of the relationship between ruler and ruled, and thus what is an appropriate relationship between ruler and ruled, has changed over time (Avramescu 2009). A ruler who eats his subjects or allows his subjects to eat each other commits a transgression that renders him unfit to rule. More subtly, the criteria that established the transgression at any given moment—in this case, natural law—has not always been the criteria through which transgression is identified. This difference can be seen in the different approaches taken to the question of rebellion by Vitoria and Pufendorf, about a century apart. Natural law is not vested in the person of the ruler, and so violations of it justify rebellion; in this sense, it is whoever follows natural law, not

the ruler, that is sovereign.[12] But from Bodin onwards, because the sovereign could not be killed even if he was a tyrant, natural law did not provide justification for rebellion. Pufendorf, as noted, declared that the transgressions of the sovereign should be taken to the magistrate. This was taken to be an acknowledgment that the state was too powerful to be challenged, and institutionalized enough to check arbitrary power. But even at the time, states were neither so powerful nor so institutionalized, as Leibniz chided Hobbes and Pufendorf (Tully 1995: 83). This elevation of the sovereign over natural law has been challenged with reformations of the latter such as the natural rights of the French Revolution, and more recently, human rights. The more general point is that the intersubjective basis for recognition of rulers as sovereigns has changed over time.

IR scholars have traced such shifts in sovereignty, with particular attention to the external dimension of sovereignty (Biersteker and Weber 1996; Bukovansky 2002; Glanville 2013). Unfortunately, these accounts have generally presented shifts in sovereignty as simultaneous changes to internal and external dimensions. So, for example, the Peace of Westphalia replaced the heteronomous internal arrangements of the Holy Roman Empire, where *jus gentium* applied to individuals, with a system of sovereign states recognizing no higher sovereign.[13] However, these shifts of internal and external dimensions of sovereignty have not always been in tandem. For example, *contra* the received understanding that European states made more powerful by the military revolution never recognized Asian and African rulers, these European powers were much weaker in land power through the eighteenth century and so recognized non-European rulers through tributes and treaties in order to establish ports and trade (Sharman 2019). Modern states recognized empires and polycentric polities even as they established direct relationships of rule within their own borders. The revocation of this recognition and the marginalization of nonstate polities as modern states gained power does not mean that claims based on this recognition, or the polities themselves, disappeared or were entirely assimilated to the state.[14]

Here, I highlight a methodological point about historicizing sovereignty. As noted, the relationship between ruler and ruled within a territory is conditioned by external factors. Among those factors are the material support conferred by recognition, but that material support, or lack thereof, is conditional on understandings of how the relationship between ruler and ruled is to be conducted and what constitutes a transgression of that relationship. International order is predicated on these shifting understandings that lead some polities to be recognized at some historical moments and not others. One cannot derive these understandings deductively, that is from modeling the relationship between ruler and ruled. At the same time, there is a theoretical link between the relationship between ruler and ruled and changes to understandings of how the relationship is to be conducted.

The link is that the breakdown of the relationship between ruler and ruled can be caused by a change in the understanding of how that relationship is to be conducted, for example in revolutionary moments (Bukovansky 2002: 22–24). One must be very careful

here to note that transgression does not necessarily lead to the breakdown of the relationship between ruler and ruled—peasant rebellions, while widespread and consciously transgressive (Guha 1999), rarely succeeded at overthrowing the ruler—and that transgression is not necessarily associated with a change in the understanding of the relationship. A coup in a dictatorship is certainly a transgression of the existing relationship between ruler and ruled, but if it merely installs a new dictator, it does not change that relationship. Such a change, or lack thereof, can only be revealed inductively, as transgression is, by definition, unbounded by existing frameworks of recognition.

This is especially true when it comes to analyzing the transgressive aspects of sovereignty, as transgressions open a range of possibilities that cannot be specified *ex ante*. The foundation of the Islamic State was articulated as a transgression of the existing framework of sovereign states. In a video entitled "The End of Sykes-Picot," bulldozers destroyed the berms lining the Iraq–Syria border to signal that instead of establishing a state seeking recognition of its sovereignty, ISIS would establish a caliphate of fluid borders and citizenship open to all believers. ISIS was, of course, defeated by a coalition committed to preserving the regnant framework of sovereignty, revealing that transgression, even one that declares sovereignty like ISIS did, does not always lead to recognition, and that transgression, by breaking with the regnant framework of recognition, opens possibilities for the relationship between ruler and ruled that must be explored inductively. Put differently, one cannot deduce from the incidence of a transgression, first, whether the transgression is done to establish a new relationship of rule; second, what the content of that new relationship might be. The exercise of sovereignty can be generative of new political possibilities but is not always so.

Haiti: Sovereign and nonsovereign

The preceding sections throw up a general challenge for doing IPS: what does a relational approach look like when the terms of the relationship are historically variable, sometimes even to the point of dissolution? I use the example of Haiti to suggest how one can pursue such an analysis. Haiti has suffered political instability, natural disasters, and grinding poverty in the past few decades, but its current travails can be traced back to how Haitians asserted sovereignty and came to be recognized (or not) as such.

Haiti, originally Santo Domingo, was formed through the world's first successful slave rebellion. Established as the empire of Haiti, it waged war with European powers, underwent a civil war, provided support to the Bolivarian revolution in Latin America, and occupied neighboring San Domingo (now the Dominican Republic) in the early nineteenth century (Fischer 2004; Hazareesingh 2020). Haiti's sovereignty was not recognized by foreign powers in the early nineteenth century as France lobbied the

United States not to recognize Haiti (which it would not do until 1862). This lack of recognition led Haitian leaders to accept unequal terms of trade with British merchants on condition that the latter would lobby their government for formal recognition (Pierre 2015). The trading arrangements diminished revenue (nineteenth-century states extracted most of their revenue from taxing trade) and alienated citizens, who were forced into labor to grow coffee for export (Dubois 2012). In 1825, in exchange for recognition, Haiti had to pay punitive damages to France for the loss of plantation property in the Revolution, increasing public debt and leading to internal instability as a majority of revenues went to debt payment rather than services for citizens. Civil unrest persisted through the nineteenth century, leading Frederick Douglass, who represented the United States in Haiti, to say in 1893, "[Haiti] has all the natural conditions essential to a noble, prosperous and happy country. Yet, there she is, torn and rent by revolutions, by clamorous factions and anarchies; floundering her life away from year in a labyrinth of social misery" (Douglass 1893). Rulers of Haiti faced difficulties consolidating power through the nineteenth century, leading from 1915 to several incursions by the US military and eventually the establishment of a US-friendly regime that was recognized as sovereign. This recognition enabled the regime, led by the Duvalier family from 1957, to borrow externally and receive foreign aid in reward for anti-Communism and supporting US migration policy. External support reduced the regime's need to bargain with its citizens. Rather, the Duvaliers preserved their rule by violating the rights of their citizens, which eventually led to the collapse of that regime. This is a history where the relationship between ruler and ruled has not been one of reciprocity, over time hindering the development of a Haitian state on the lines of a Euro-American state. The lack of such a relationship more recently has compelled the international community to prop up a series of rulers, who, in turn, are not compelled to bargain with their citizens, until there is unrest, at which point the ruler is replaced with the same underlying dependence on foreign support. On two occasions, in 2004 and 2018, the unrest was catalyzed by IMF reforms that reduced subsidies on food and fuel.

This stylized history reveals three things. First, Haiti's internal politics has been shaped by its external politics, meaning that what is seen as the internal dimension of sovereignty cannot be understood without attention to its external dimension, or recognition from outside actors. Second, the external and internal dimensions of Haiti's sovereignty have frequently been at odds: Haiti has been recognized as sovereign when its ruler has not exercised authority within its borders and vice versa. Third, combining these two insights, we realize that the two dimensions of sovereignty do not necessarily reinforce each other, as is presumed in the theory of sovereignty in which the sovereign state that is recognized by others wields ultimate authority within its borders.

To say that Haiti's internal politics has been shaped by its external politics is so obvious as to be trivial. But the external politics—specifically the lack of recognition the nascent Haitian state received—affected Haiti's internal politics in a way that reverberated outside of Haiti. The Haitian Revolution sought to transform the

relationship between rulers and ruled, based on new ideas on how that relationship should be conducted like the Rights of Man that derived, at least in part, from outside of Haiti.[15] The successful Revolution, embodying republican principles, should have led to external recognition but did not.[16] Haiti was not recognized because the Revolution, by declaring slaves able to rule themselves, transgressed extant criteria for recognition.[17] Though the criteria were especially fluid as the institutions of hereditary rule and slavery began to be challenged in the late eighteenth century, Haiti found itself excluded from even the reformulated understandings.[18] For Haiti to be recognized would have involved changing the criteria for recognition in ways that would not happen until decolonization, revealing, again, that transgression does not always lead to recognition.

We can see the missed opportunity for such a change to the criteria for recognition in the writings of those Europeans who *did* support Haitian independence. The English translator of the works of the Haitian diplomat, Baron de Vastey (quoted in Daut 2017: 81), noted,

> [i]n the instructive records of such a history [of Haiti], [that] we should see [in] a people … after their emancipation from bondage, those dormant energies of the soul, and those latent virtues of the heart which we had been taught to believe them incapable of possessing, and, not only forming themselves into an organized and well regulated community, but starting, almost *per salute*, into notice, as statesmen, legislators, and historians.

In the regnant understanding of sovereignty, Haitian sovereignty was transgressive, and so Haiti could not be recognized. Yet, this writer inveighed, the history of Haiti showed that the regnant understanding, based on the idea that "blacks" could not rule themselves, was wrong. The transgression of the relationship between ruler and ruled in Haiti thus pointed to a revolution in sovereignty, and so international order, albeit one which did not occur until much later.

This revolution in sovereignty that did not occur reveals the historically variable character of sovereignty, on both dimensions. Internally, the Haitian Revolution declared that all races were equally capable of rule; externally, polities led by a member of any race could be recognized. But this could not take place within the existing framework of recognition, which was predicated on *not* recognizing certain groups as capable of rule. Any evidence of black achievement was dismissed at that time: from David Hume writing of a Jamaican poet that his achievements were "slender … like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly" to Thomas Jefferson's assessment of the African-American poet Phyllis Wheatley that "the compositions published under her name are beneath the dignity of criticism."[19] The Haitian Revolution was treated similarly. As such, it should serve as a useful corrective to Whiggish views of history in IR that assimilate a range of struggles, among them the anti-colonial and Indigenous movements that transgressed the regnant framework of recognition to claims for recognition, and expanded concepts

thereof, like human rights and anti-slavery movements. The Haitian Revolution was qualitatively different from the anti-slavery movement. To place the two within the same broader movement for equal rights misses how the former struggle had to—indeed, aimed to—transgress the framework of recognition within which the latter struggle worked. The Haitian case reveals, further, that transgressions are not necessarily followed by changes to the frameworks of recognition.

As summarized above, Haiti's external recognition has fluctuated, but not as one might expect if internal and external sovereignty are positively related; that is, Haiti has not always been denied recognition when its rulers have been unable to govern Haiti and not always been granted recognition when its rulers have been able to govern Haiti. The Duvaliers were recognized, and supported by external powers, even when their policies ruined the Haitian economy and eventuated in protests that led to the demise of the regime. By contrast, Haiti was not granted recognition by France until it agreed to punitive compensation that devoured the majority of revenue and led to discontent among Haitian citizens through the nineteenth century. The conditions under which external recognition was granted in these instances made the exercise of rule more precarious within Haiti. This is not what we would expect if Haiti's external recognition was predicated on the exercise of rule within Haiti, as in the ideal-typical sovereign state.

That internal and external dimensions of sovereignty may destabilize rather than reinforce each other is the final lesson of this schematic history of Haiti. The Haitian Revolution was an exercise of sovereignty—transgressing the regnant framework of recognition that did not recognize blacks as capable of ruling themselves—even though it did not change that framework, neither did it result in recognition for Haiti. The lack of recognition, and the concessions made to gain it, made it harder for Haiti to maintain its independence from foreign interference over the next century. Agreeing to the indemnity with France to gain external recognition created conflicts between rulers and ruled, and more generally impoverished Haiti. Put bluntly, what made Haiti sovereign—the transgression of the framework of recognition—made it not-sovereign—first, in the sense of not being recognized as sovereign and then rulers, in their effort to overturn that nonrecognition, becoming unable to rule Haiti in a way that would forestall violations of its sovereignty in future.

The Duvalier period shows us the other combination—of external recognition leading to a diminishment of rule internally—by enabling the nonrecognition of the ruled by the ruler. Rulers who give up independence on some policy dimensions for external support do not have to bargain with their populations, but this does not, in itself, make these regimes unstable. Rulers might use the additional resources to reduce extraction, for example by reducing defense spending in exchange for a great power's military protection, and so reduce conflict between rulers and ruled. One logical source of conflict between rulers and ruled in this scenario is when the ruler implements policies that the great power demands but the ruled dislike.[20] This is certainly possible, but the Duvalier situation reveals a more fundamental problem. When the ruler needs to be

recognized by the ruled to extract revenue from them, he must concede to some constraints on his exercise of power, and the ability to withhold revenue provides the ruled with some leverage over the ruler. Bargaining over revenue establishes what is permitted and what is not in the relationship between ruler and ruled.

Inversely, the diminishment or absence of the need to bargain—which derives in part from external recognition—relaxes constraints on the ruler. Rulers who bargain less are permitted more; for rulers who do not bargain, everything is permitted. This, of course, is the Sade-ean—sovereign who is excessive and blind: excessive because he can do as he will; blind because his excesses make his subjects conceal information and lie (Mbembe 2001). The combination makes the breakdown of the relationship between ruler and ruled more likely: as the ruled withhold information, the ruler behaves ever more excessively, until ultimately, the ruled rise up against the ruler or are destroyed by him (as envisioned by Sade). The Duvalier regime represents the first possibility. I have dwelt on this because extant understandings of world politics, especially understandings of sovereignty, underestimate the extent to which external recognition of sovereignty can enable transgression by rulers, which then makes the internal exercise of rule more difficult. Put differently, sovereignty by its very nature is not self-enforcing, and nor is international order based on recognizing rulers as sovereign: this is where the *practice* of sovereignty, which leads to the dissolution of polities, compels a rethinking of the *theory* of sovereignty. The ruler always has the power to transgress; he is less likely to do so if he does not discount the future and is reliant on the ruled for revenue. The existence of a source of revenue different from the ruled vitiates this and makes the relationship even more dependent on the will of the ruler. The concept of sovereignty presented here places the possibility of transgression at the center of the relationship between ruler and ruled. But the actual incidence of transgression is subject to historically variable factors. The contemporary intersubjective framework that regulates recognition—because it enables rulers to draw on the larger (in historical terms) resources of modern states—is one such factor that reduces constraints on rulers and enables them to transgress. As such, what made Duvalier's Haiti sovereign—recognition by external powers—ultimately made it not-sovereign—as the regime collapsed and successor regimes relied on foreign support to survive.

If sovereignty is understood as the recognition by other rulers of a Haitian ruler who effectively exercises power over the territory, Haitian history will generally lack one or other feature, and so its sovereignty appears illusory or irrelevant. This would be a significant misrepresentation of Haitian history and shows, first, the problems with understanding sovereignty as the property of a constituted entity, like the sovereign state; and second, the problems with analyzing a polity like Haiti without reference to sovereignty. The concept presented here—which emphasizes the transgressive potential of sovereignty—helps us understand Haitian history as a series of transgressions that are, on one hand, sovereign acts, but on the other, acts that have diminished the ability to exercise rule in Haiti. These transgressions, I have emphasized, are conditioned by

Haiti's external recognition or lack thereof. Haiti's sovereignty is paradoxical, but this highlights the need for an expanded concept of sovereignty rather than analyzing Haitian history without reference to sovereignty.

Conclusion

I have presented a concept of sovereignty that allows analysts to approach it over time—as a relationship of rule within a territory and recognition outside it that has as matter of its structure the possibility of transgression or nonrecognition—yet historically variable, because conditioned by changing intersubjective understandings of rule and transgression, which lead to external recognition in some moments and not others. This more capacious concept of sovereignty is not incompatible with the regnant approach to sovereignty in IR, namely the external recognition of a state that effectively exercises rule over its territory. But it goes further to allow us to conceptualize empirically common departures from regnant theory.

This expanded understanding means that, for all its conceptual slipperiness and capricious application, the concept of sovereignty—internal and external, recognition and nonrecognition—can provide analytical purchase on how the units of world politics endure or break down, and thus any understanding of international order. To understand the dissolution of a particular international order, one needs to understand the particular forms nonrecognition takes, and as sovereignty involves the possibility of nonrecognition, an understanding of sovereignty provides purchase for understanding the dissolution of international order. This requires a more complex theorization that the regnant approach to sovereignty as the basis for a stable form of international order, the modern state system. The complexity, I have suggested, can be unpacked by an approach that is relational, hence intersubjective, and, it follows, historicist. Such an approach reveals the complexity to be central to the concept of sovereignty; a matter of structure, not noise that requires scholars to revisit the concept time after time.

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Notes

1. Quoted in Doniger (2009: 139).
2. Hunter-gatherer (also called stateless) societies, while violent, did not have surpluses to protect and so lacked the sort of hierarchy and specialization in violence that agricultural societies developed.
3. The unequal yet dependent relationship is most associated with Hegel's master–slave model.

4. This inequality means that the relationship is not self-enforcing, meaning that in the absence of third-party enforcement, each side always prefers maintaining the relationship to dissolving it. Theoretically, a ruler who does not discount the future and has only one source of revenue—a "stationary bandit"—can be constrained from "eating the people" because without the people, he will starve (Olson 1993). But these conditions—a low discount rate and only one source of revenue—are not just stringent but the first, the discount rate, is entirely at the discretion of the ruler, so unenforceable by the ruled.
5. See e.g. the Marquis de Sade's description of sovereignty as "the negation of prohibition" (Bataille 1992: 254, 252–255).
6. In European political theory, the conditions under which rebellion was justified occupied Vitoria and Grotius, but by the time of Pufendorf, the ruled were expected to seek recourse through the courts because the state was too powerful to be overthrown (Holzgrefe 1989). Sovereignty, by this point, was seen to be entirely vested in the emergent sovereign state, and positive law superseded arguments from natural law (Avramescu 2009).
7. A relationship based on comparative advantage is self-enforcing, because it allows each side to specialize in what it does best, and specialization does not allow an imbalance of power to build on one or other side because exchange is, by definition, in equilibrium. By contrast, a relationship of rule does involve "specialization"—as the ruler specializes in violence and the ruled in production—but this specialization leads to an imbalance of power.
8. This is a stylized version of what happened in West Africa following the commodity price shocks of the 1970s (Bates 2008).
9. Holm and Sending call this "misrecognition" (Holm and Sending 2018). *Contra* claims that this shows the "hypocrisy" or vacuity of the concept, the potential to not recognize another's sovereignty, to not be bound by constraints, is fundamental to the concept.
10. On this recognition between Indigenous peoples and Europeans, see Tully (1995: 127–128).
11. For more on recognition, see the special issue of *Review of International Studies* 44 (5).
12. Multiple loci of sovereignty were present in other locations, such as pre-modern southern India, where ritual and political sovereignty coexisted (Stein 1989: 62–63).
13. For the manifold problems with seeing 1648 as an "ontological big bang," see de Carvalho, Leira, and Hobson (2011).
14. For a critique of this tendency, see Grovogui (1996).
15. A debate continues on whether the ideas that animated the Haitian Revolution drew on Enlightenment notions or African traditions (e.g. Shilliam 2017).
16. And was ignored in histories of modern revolutions until recently (Trouillot 1995).
17. As Douglass (1893)put it,

> the great fact concerning [Haiti's] people, is, that they were negro slaves and by force conquered their masters and made themselves free and independent. As a people thus made free and having remained so for eighty-seven years, they are now asked to justify their assumption of statehood at the bar of the civilized world by conduct becoming a civilized nation.

18. For example, Bukovansky's superb study of changing understandings of sovereignty during this period does not mention the Haitian case, which suggests that either it played no role in those changing understandings or, if it did, it was disavowed, much like Hegel followed developments in Haiti but excluded it from his theory (Bukovansky 2002; Buck-Morss 2009).
19. On Hume, see Eze (2000).
20. For instance, Pakistan's support of the US-led War on Terror has led its citizens to criticize their own government *and* the United States.

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CHAPTER 22

THE STRUCTURAL ORDER OF NEOLIBERAL RACIAL CAPITAL

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INTRODUCTION

Over the course of more than five centuries, European colonialism extended across most of the world and instituted violent systems of value extraction from the commodified and cheapened natures and labor of peoples of color.[1] The plantations and mines of the Global South still stand (and expand) as material testament to systems of labor/nature exhaustion within global colonial structures of value.[2] Extraction to Europe and to/within its whitened settler colonies has been enabled by, and served to produce, enduring structures of race in the world system. Fundamental to all of this were, and still are, the global financial and monetary systems first developed through empire;[3] financial systems that might be understood as the rigging for racial extractive flows, and which anti-colonial projects of Southern sovereignty[4] and self-determination[5] have tried forcefully to dismantle.

Against the collective power and vision of these anti-colonial movements, how did the rigging of extractive finance not only remain in place but also become extended and reinforced, especially in the neoliberal era? The endurance and extension of global structures of racial finance capital, which enable both extraction from the South *and* ecological exhaustion as combined processes, is the motivating concern of this chapter. The central argument here is that neoliberalism should be understood as a counter-revolution against decolonization[6] (see Slobodian 2022), which has worked to restore flows of cheap resources by undermining Third World/Global South sovereignty, protecting international capital markets from the collective will of Southern peoples, and solidifying racial hierarchies of finance that structure enduring unequal exchange and extraction. Answering the question of whether there is any order to international life, as posed in this volume,[7] this chapter details the ordering work done by racial hierarchies of finance after the neoliberal counter-revolution. The focus here is how the structural order of neoliberal racial capital[8] maintains the international division of labor and the law of worldwide value (Amin 2010) between South and North, which keeps the labor and natures of the South cheap, expropriatable, and exploitable.

The analysis in this chapter opens by making the case for understanding neoliberalism as a direct response to the powerful global shifts instigated by waves of decolonization. Following this, the text evaluates the enduring and dominant "plantation mode of finance," which is characterized by extractive investment in export industries serving external accumulation, and which continues into the neoliberal era. Finally, the chapter closes with a summary of a growing body of literature on the racial hierarchies of the international system and financial subordination in the Global South, which partly forms the structural order of neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism as counter-revolution against decolonization

The powerful tectonics of Southern struggles for decolonization shook the whole world in the twentieth century. Anti-colonial movements envisioned and enacted projects aimed at meaningful national sovereignty for the peoples of the South, but which also sought broader political communities of solidarity and a more just international order (Grovogui 1996; Phạm and Shilliam 2016; Getachew 2019). Against this backdrop, high up in the white mountains of Switzerland, the Mont Pelerin Society assembled for the first time in 1947, and, even at this altitude, the tremors of Third World self-determination still shook the ground. There, before ink had touched paper on most independence proclamations, and while blood was still being spilled for freedom, a group of Euro-American men gathered to sketch out a vision of *order* that would later be named and widely recognized as "neoliberalism."

Among the early Mont Pelerin collective were Milton Friedman, Friedrich Hayek, Wilhelm Röpke, and Ludwig von Mises—names that continue to echo in the halls of political and financial power well into the twenty-first century. The Society itself pinned its colors to the mast from the beginning as an explicitly *Western civilizational* project[9] concerned with shoring up global order in the face of decolonization. However, their perceived moral civilizational order wholly depended on the *material base of colonial extraction*—a material base that appeared to tremble beneath their feet in that moment. In the words of Jessica Whyte (2019: 61): "The question for the neoliberals was what 'sensible' arrangement would confine former colonies to their allotted roles in the global division of labour as providers of raw materials and cheap labour, while shaping market subjects." In other words, how could the West's material base of extracted and undervalued labor and natures be secured in spite of expanding formal political sovereignty across the South? How could the perception of individual freedom in the market replace the expectation for the sovereign state to shape higher value-added economies and end cheap extraction? Taking seriously the original intentions of neoliberalism's early architects therefore means situating this project of global order in relation to the major power shifts of the twentieth century.

In dominant accounts, neoliberalism is commonly presented as a novel innovation of the 1970s, which forced a qualitative rupture with economics as previously known, radically freeing the market at the expense of the state.[10] But what if we look at neoliberalism not as rupture or novelty but as a *reassertion* of the colonial order of extraction, which was temporarily disturbed by anti-colonial revolution and the sovereign post-colonial state? With a focus on national scale reforms, Ndongo Samba Sylla (2021) reflects specifically on the remarkable similarities between colonial and contemporary neoliberal macroeconomics. The fiscal and monetary priorities of the contemporary neoliberal paradigm, Sylla argues, "were already applied in the European colonies, particularly in Africa." The emphasis on sound finance (the pressure to balance fiscal books and avoid deficits) for example, is a near carbon-copy of the "colonial self-sufficiency" policy and an "imperial doctrine by essence." Colonies were designed to cover their own costs, the military costs of the colonizers, and expenditures that often served "the profitability of private metropolitan capital." In this model, surplus value, rather than being directed toward social welfare spending, would be drained away to the metropole, a pattern reproduced under what we understand today as neoliberal macroeconomic reforms, which in turn complement neoliberal reforms at the international scale, as expanded on below.

While neoliberalism as a project and a set of processes has been pulled in various directions far beyond Geneva, and influenced by actors, institutions, and ideas that do not always easily cohere, the outcome has been the creation of structures that are remarkably faithful to the dreams of the Mont Pelerin Society's early members. In concise form, neoliberalism is a coherent ordering system of radical freedom for international finance capital that is enabled by, and reinforces, the arrested sovereignty of (especially) Southern peoples. As the analysis here will cover, the rigging for this system includes racial financial hierarchies, as well as mechanisms insulating financial markets from sovereign pressures, ensuring flows of extractive capital. Neoliberalism can therefore be seen as a restoration of colonial structures of extraction without the direct rule of the colonial state. At the national level, this configuration also replaced Third World-era domestic inter-class alliances with alliances between national bourgeoisies and metropolitan capital at the expense of working class, peasant, and Indigenous communities in the South (Patnaik and Patnaik 2021: 269).

Again, rather than a simple reconfiguration involving state retreat and market freedom, at the international scale, neoliberalism instituted complex supranational structures to ensure that markets would be insulated, or more forcefully "encased" (Slobodian 2018: 13) from the collective pressures exerted by various anti-colonial, feminist, and worker movements, as well as from the more progressive states of the Global South and North. Increasingly complex mechanisms of juridical power instituted through supranational structures like the World Trade Organization (WTO) protect the hypermobility of capital against democratic interference, clearing the brush for speculative attacks on currencies and for the fluid passage of illicit financial flows (or

capital flight). This in turn rests on a project to extend the developing agenda for individual human rights to inanimate entities including capital itself. To summarize Slobodian's argument (2018: 277),

> the recasting of trading rights, market rights, and capital rights as individual rights was proposed by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and neoliberals against the United Nations' idea of social and economic rights around 1945, incorporated as the market freedoms and market citizens of the European integration project in the 1950s and 1960s, and scaled up to the WTO in the course of GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] reform in the 1970s and 1980s.

In short, neoliberals diverted the post-war rights project towards making a case for constructing legal international structures to protect finance capital flows from the collective will of movements and Southern governments.

However, early neoliberals were not acting on instinct and foresight alone. Earlier experiences in which sovereign peoples had already rocked the domination of finance capital and foreshadowed the power of Third Worldism to force structural change sounded warnings of the unfolding dialectics that were likely to follow decolonization. Those countries with the audacity to win their independence from European powers much earlier in the nineteenth century—including Haiti, Liberia, and the Dominican Republic—had already been subjected to imperialist financial expansion on the part of US banking interests. Caribbean sovereignty had thoroughly tested Wall Street through the shocks of the 1930s, and Wall Street had responded by shoring up financial imperialism (Hudson 2017). In Peter James Hudson's reading of George Padmore's analysis of the early twentieth-century US financial expansion, which ultimately diminished local sovereignty from Haiti to Liberia: "finance capitalism *was* racial capitalism [emphasis added]" (Hudson 2017: 272). Hudson explains the expansion of US finance capital in the 1930s as follows (2017: 275):

> For Wall Street, the crises of the 1930s forced a rethinking of the organisation of finance capital and the project of internationalisation in a new era of governance, regulation, and sovereignty. The City Bank and the Chase Bank would spend the next decades struggling to return to the heady days of unregulated expansion and unbounded freedom that characterised the early twentieth-century history of imperial banking.

Consciousness of those shifting tectonics of power was shared among the wider transnational finance community, which stretched all the way from 1930s Wall Street to 1940s Mont Pelerin. The challenges posed to imperial finance by a defiant sovereign

Haiti, among others, were extending all across the South as waves of decolonization progressed.

In the mid-twentieth century decades up to the 1970s and 1980s, Third Worldist anti-colonial efforts, exerted through the post-colonial state, managed to secure degrees of "protection from metropolitan capital" in Patnaik and Patnaik's terms (2021: 269). Barriers to free-flowing extractive capital and limits to trade flows characterized this period in which many newly independent states aligned more closely with their own working classes against international financial interests. However, from the 1970s and 1980s, the neoliberal counter-revolution brought sweeping financial liberalization, often forced by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) as part of debt conditionalities (Kvangraven, Koddenbrock, and Sylla 2021; Perry 2021). Imposed neoliberal "development" projects turned heavily toward the goal of financial inclusion at multiple scales without reflection on the consequences of inclusion within highly unequal structures of power. The hegemonic mode of development shifted, largely under coercion, from strategic state direction of productive industries to financial inclusion within what the section to follow names as the "plantation mode of finance."

Neoliberalism and the plantation mode of finance

The contemporary order of finance capital in the Global South might best be understood as an extension of the plantation as a social and economic order of racial extraction. In Sylvia Wynter's resounding terms (Wynter 1971: 100),

> The plantation was the superstructure of civilisation [but] the superstructure was not related to its base, did not respond to the needs of the base, but rather to the demands of external shareholders and the metropolitan market. The plantation was run by the manager class, the colon class. This class and the labouring indigenous class faced each other across barricades that are in-built in the very system which created them.

The colonial plantation, in Wynter's analysis, was constructed on a rift between Indigenous/working class socioecologies and the colonial economy, which serves external accumulation. With the expansion of plantations and other extractive industrial formations, investment capital drawn from across Europe and the United States during the colonial era served to transform vibrant Indigenous socioecologies into coercive, monocultural plantation landscapes (Tilley 2021). This kind of finance capital input, although often presented as productive and necessary investment for the South, was always intended for external accumulation, rather than local development at the "base" in any meaningful definition. The lingering impact of colonial plantation investment, in terms of degraded ecologies and impoverished societies, is evident from Indonesia to

Sri Lanka and from Brazil to Jamaica (Beckford 1999; Tilley 2020; Perry 2023). However, the model of the plantation as an extractive economic formation which alienates the social base can be applied to a range of contemporary arrangements that draw in international finance capital to socioecologically exhaustive low value-added sectors.

Kwame Nkrumah also understood extractive foreign capital to be a key feature of neocolonialism; a feature inevitably bound up with the corrosion of Third World sovereignty. Despite the appearance of independence in the legal and symbolic domains, neocolonialism means that the Third World country's "economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside" (Nkrumah 1965: ix). Nkrumah goes on to emphasize that, under neocolonialism "foreign capital is used for the exploitation rather than for the development of the less developed parts of the world. Investment under neo-colonialism increases rather than decreases the gap between the rich and the poor countries of the world" (Nkrumah 1965: x). The dynamics Nkrumah warned of, and battled against, during the 1960s would only become more intense as extractive foreign capital gained ground over Southern sovereignty under the national and international scale neoliberal reforms of the decades to follow.

The plantation mode of finance has been particularly resurgent since the realization and embedding of the neoliberal counter-revolution from the 1970s onwards. Multinational capital invests in speculative and extractive activities—from plantations to mines to labor-intensive low value-added manufacturing—which generate flows of profits to "external shareholders and the metropolitan market," to return to Wynter's terms (1971: 100; see also Patnaik 2018). In the present, constant efforts to remove barriers to extractive "capital-as-finance," as Koddenbrock and colleagues explain, serve "to expand possibilities for capital accumulation in a world no longer structured by the coexistence of colonial territorial empires" (Koddenbrock, Kvangraven, and Sylla 2022: 709, drawing on Patnaik 2018). Further, with reference to the classic plantation economies of the Caribbean, economists from the region[11] have long illustrated the conditions of being locked into extractive relations and related indebtedness. Keston Perry (2023: 6) names this as a problem of "conditional sovereignty" under which there is little policy or fiscal space to tackle socioecological problems, especially under the increasingly destructive power of the climate crisis.

Extractive capital-as-finance can be contrasted with forms of investment in longer term, higher value-added and socioecologically useful activities that respond to the needs of the democratic pressures of the social base, rather than the external investor-beholden superstructure. The resultant lack of democratic power "on the ground" and the concurrent excess of imperialist power in foreign investor dominance is realized through the international market mechanism, which was expanded and fortified under the neoliberal counter-revolution. However, rather than "the market" being all-powerful such that we can speak meaningfully of the sovereignty of the market itself, it is instead backed up by, and dependent on, the ever more complex architecture of insulating

institutions and protective mechanisms of juridical power, as presented in the previous section.

Racial hierarchies of the international and financial subordination

Siba Grovogui (1996: 180) once identified "the stifling effects of the subjection of Third World entities to a global political, cultural, scientific, and technological apparatus that guarantees Western hegemony within a hierarchical international order." Under this hierarchical structural order, escaping what Walter Rodney (1972) defined as "underdevelopment" has been all but impossible for most countries of the South. In turn, this persistent underdevelopment is presented as the result of inherent deficiencies in formerly colonized countries (Grovogui 1996), making for a seemingly endless self-reinforcing cycle of subordination and racial stigma. Adding to an extensive literature revealing juridical, ethical, cultural, and institutional elements of international hierarchies (e.g. Shilliam 2008; Ling 2014; Krishna 2014; Anievas, Manchanda, and Shilliam 2014; Rojas 2016), an expanding body of work has recently turned to elaborate related racial *financial* hierarchies in much more detail (e.g. Alami and Guermond 2023; Perry 2023; Tilley 2021).

The neoliberal counter-revolution, as we have seen, brought a range of macroeconomic and international scale reforms that have worked in articulation to reinforce the power of extractive international finance and undermine newly won Southern sovereignty. These dynamics, in turn, helped to largely maintain the subordinate positions of Global South countries within the world system. The structural organization of the international into racial hierarchies of financial risk, of currency power, and of stages of developmental "progress" also has direct bearing on degrees of self-determination and sovereignty in the Global South.

Currency power, for example, traps Southern countries in subordinate positions in a number of ways. At the top of the hierarchy, issuing the US dollar as core currency and as effective "world money," in Marxian terms, confers exceptional privileges on the United States. For many decades, the dollar has maintained its dominance in international trade; it features heavily in global foreign exchange transactions and makes up a large proportion of the world's foreign exchange reserves, as well as international bank deposits and debt securities (see Helleiner 2008; Bernards 2023; Ivanova 2013). In contrast, countries with currencies positioned much lower on the global hierarchy face higher borrowing costs due to higher interest rates on domestic markets relating to the need to generate lucrative returns on investments constructed as "risky" (see Alami and Guermond 2023; Haag 2023). The section to follow explores this further as racial extraction, but in brief, higher interest rates are intended to increase demand in currencies that are deemed to be "high risk." Countries in this position become locked

into relations of dependency, which in turn means they have limited self-determination and autonomy over their own policymaking. Such conditions of limited policy agency leave countries beholden to the export of low-value commodities—in other words, extractive and ecology-exhausting cheap natures—facilitated by the plantation mode of finance detailed in the previous section.

The relationship between self-determination and racial economic hierarchies is therefore also circular and reciprocal, with diminished policy autonomy restricting more productive and value-adding use of capital, in turn increasing dependency. As Kvangraven, Koddenbrock, and Sylla (2021: 122), building on Nkrumah and Amin, argue, in countries with more capacity for self-determination in policy,: "financial institutions transform savings into long-term investments, while in peripheral countries, they are used for short-term financing of the economy or for state expenditure." To recap, countries with currencies designated as "weak" and "risky" face higher borrowing costs and diminished sovereignty over economic and social policy, which inhibits their attempts to escape the condition of underdevelopment, which in turn allows them to be classed as "weak" and "risky" in the subjective eyes of investors, and so the cycle continues.

Such dynamics are increasingly analyzed within a broader literature on financial subordination on a global scale. The research agenda around financial subordination, as developed by a range of post-Keynesian and dependency theorists (Haag 2023; Alami et al. 2023; Kvangraven, Koddenbrock, and Sylla 2021), focuses on the integration of (mainly) formerly colonized countries into subordinate positions within the hierarchical structures of global finance. From this subordinate position, the terms by which countries of the South can engage with money and finance are generally extractive and exploitative, and reproduce relations of domination.

The climate crisis, rather than bringing impetus for breaking down racial hierarchies and working toward a more just and egalitarian order, is instead opening opportunities for deepening, embedding, and adapting existing racial financial hierarchies. With a focus on the Caribbean, Perry (2023) documents the proliferation of climate finance innovations in recent years, from debt for climate swaps to climate risk insurance. In Perry's (2023: 1) terms, these represent "coercive financial instruments," which serve to "further integrate these societies differentially into racialised financial geographies." The implications of contemporary climate finance in relation to risk are further drawn out in the section to follow.

As elaborated above, the way finance capital works through international racial hierarchies generates both underdevelopment, in the Rodneyan sense, and ecological exhaustion. The order of racial finance, as it is currently structured, locks Global South countries largely into commodity export roles and restricts the policy autonomy needed to move up through higher value-added sectors. Racial finance, hand in hand with the global law of value, helps to secure the extraction of cheap natures, depletes Southern ecologies, and accelerates the climate crisis and biodiversity loss. All of this keeps the

Global North afloat at the expense of the undervalued labor and natures of the South, a picture that corresponds neatly with the Geneva neoliberals' original vision of global order.

Risk as racial extraction

Financial subordination also relates to, and enables, the mobilization of risk *as racial extraction*. As covered in the previous section, finance has long been more costly for formerly colonized countries of the Global South than those of the Global North, with their more powerful currencies. In the contemporary context of the climate crisis, those countries facing the greatest impact of climate-related disasters that have urgent need for funds for reconstruction and adaptation are left with little option but to borrow at inflated rates. Debt instruments, with high-interest impacts, remain the predominant means of climate-change-related funding for countries made vulnerable to the crisis (Perry 2023). This also extends to financing the costs of the renewable energy technology needed to progress through a transition away from carbon-based fuel sources, which is more costly for countries of the South (Haag 2023). Climate finance has therefore opened up new (or renewed) forms of indebtedness for those former colonies seeking energy transitions and those particularly affected by climate-change-related impacts, such as rising sea levels, the salination of water sources and agricultural land, and extreme weather events, including hurricanes. Finance for climate adaptation has therefore instigated a new "bond-age" (Perry 2021) especially for Caribbean countries, for whom the crisis is immediately existential.

At COP27[12] in 2022, the Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley, lamented the ongoing imperialism of global finance in the present, which helps ensure that "the Global South remains at the mercy of the Global North." Levelling criticism at the IMF and World Bank, Mottley stressed that countries cannot "finance their way to net-zero" because of enduring imperial structures. Current financial arrangements ensure that "The Global North borrows [at] interest rates of between one to four per cent; the Global South at fourteen per cent. And then we wonder why the just energy partnerships are not working" (Mottley 2022). At the heart of the problem Mottley identifies is precisely the construction of risk in relation to racialized perceptions of former colonies in particular as being more dangerous for investments, which in turn means much more costly borrowing for them. As Steffen Haag (2023: 3) argues with reference to Cedric Robinson's racial capitalism, a "dynamic of differentiation" is evident not only in the way racialized communities and individuals are devalued in processes of surplus extraction but also in racialized risk judgments, which construct particular countries and communities of color as inherently more risky than others.

In the analysis of Alami and Guermond (2023) risk valuation is at once a mode of producing racialized difference at the same time as being a reflection of the prior

racialization of who does, and who does not, constitute "ideal-typical subjects of finance" (Alami and Guermond 2023: 1081). Processes of risk valuation and management are subjective and draw on established perceptions of particular peoples and spaces as being inherently more risky than others. This production of "abstract risk" is a collective and cumulative process, added to over time by an array of financial actors whose racialized perceptions determine levels of risk and present this as an outcome of scientific economic calculation. Haag draws on this approach to risk in an analysis of renewables financing in Senegal and emphasizes that the "construction of abstract risk is not merely discursive in nature but justifies and normalizes financial mechanisms of interest rates dynamics" (Haag 2023: 9). In short, the racialized construction of risk results in higher interest rates, which provide higher returns for international investors—in other words, the mobilization of risk is a form of racial extraction by its very nature.

Leading on from the racial designation of "risky" entities, Daniela Gabor's work has shown how "de-risking" pressure has led to a range of initiatives aimed at facilitating access for private finance in the Global South. In order to secure revenue flows and guarantee the safety of investors' returns, de-risking strategies transfer risk onto the Global South state and away from private finance (Gabor 2021). The central objective of "making development investible" (Gabor 2021: 429) in the Global South requires a transformed role for the state, an effective socialization of risk, and the reinforcing of the plantation mode of finance at the expense of public finances. Again, the implications for Southern sovereignty are clear as the state is turned increasingly to the service of international investors' interests and further away from the interests of the domestic social base.

Gabor reads this as a paradigm shift of sufficient magnitude to warrant a new "consensus" label to name emerging ordering forces: the "Wall Street Consensus" (WSC). This Consensus, in the pursuit of investible development assets, involves both expanding the role of the state to cover "risk-proofing" such assets while also transforming local systems to be more amenable to the finance capital of portfolio investors. Further, this agenda works towards reorienting "the institutional mechanisms of the state towards protecting the political order of financial capitalism *against* climate justice movements [emphasis added]" (Gabor 2021: 431). As climate change intensifies, however, finance capital is increasingly turning toward (rather than obstructing) green new deal initiatives as accumulation projects. Most recently, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in the United States and the European Green Deal have recast key transition elements, including mineral extraction from the Global South, as "de-risked" accumulation ventures backed by massive state investment (Aronoff 2023; Tansel and Tilley 2024).

In the present then, the de-risking state can itself be seen as a renewed form of market insulation or encasement (Slobodian 2018) at the domestic level against contemporary Global South movements rising in response to the climate crisis. It also serves to limit

climate action to a particular form of energy transition as an accumulation and market-making project centered on an electrified consumer society for the comparably privileged on a global scale. Evidence of increased market insulation through the state at the national level reinforces a reading of neoliberalism as an adaptable order, which works at different scales and through different institutions. And yet, despite this dynamism, neoliberalism stays remarkably faithful to the original aims of the Mont Pelerin Society to undermine Third World sovereignty, secure flows of cheap resources, and to shield markets—especially finance capital markets—from the collective will of the peoples and states of the Global South.

Conclusion

The dominant understanding of neoliberalism holds that this novel system, birthed in the 1970s as a rupture from the Keynesian status quo, empowered the market at the expense of the state. In this chapter, following important recent interventions (Sylla 2021; Slobodian 2018; Whyte 2019), neoliberalism is instead approached as a specific turn in the *longue durée* of racial capitalism (Robinson 2000), which served to restore colonial structures of extraction. As a series of macroeconomic and international reforms, neoliberalism has worked to restore self-sufficiency as "sound finance" as well as to secure the international scale protection of investor access to cheap resources against the sovereign exertion of Southern peoples. The order built by these articulated national and international neoliberal reforms serves as the rigging that ensures radical freedom for extractive finance capital, and that persistently erodes the hard-won sovereignty of the South.

Against formidable but ultimately heavily sabotaged Third World anti-colonial efforts, neoliberalism restored the plantation mode of finance, which extracts from, and alienates, the social base and delivers cheap resources and surplus value to the metropolitan market. This plantation mode of finance—now extended to fighting the fires and stemming the tides of climate change—rests on the profitable business of the construction of risk. As this chapter has detailed, racialized processes of risk-making not only make possible racial extraction through high interest payments to investors, but also, in turn, provide the whole rationale for "de-risking" strategies which pass on private-investor risk to the post-colonial state and further diminish sovereignty.

The Third World struggles of Southern peoples against continued subordination within an international racial hierarchy, as well as against the perpetual extraction enabled by the global law of value, were largely crushed, in no small part by the neoliberal counter-revolution. The atrophy of the biosphere, of socioecological life, and of egalitarian "development" (as many of the peoples of the South understand it) has been facilitated and accelerated by the structural order of neoliberal racial capital. The answer to this systemic atrophy, which can lead only toward socioecological collapse,

is not more and better finance or more and better market innovations but wholesale structural change along with a massive repatriation of capital from Global North to South—in short, *structural reparations*.

Notes

1. See, among many other important works on colonial extraction, Fanon (961); Nkrumah (1965); Rodney (1972); Lowe (2015); and Patnaik (2017); as well as Patel and Moore (2017) specifically on "cheap natures."
2. See e.g. and among others, Li and Semedi (2021); Chao (2022); Tilley (2020).
3. As Keston Perry (2021: 363), drawing on Walter Rodney (1972), explains, "the colonial project was built on an edifice of banks, insurance houses, financial monopolies, trading companies, and mining companies which benefited from phenomenal surplus value extracted from peasants and workers."
4. Sovereignty can be defined broadly as "ordinarily, the absolute internal authority of political entities and their capacity to secure external recognition by like bodies" (Grovogui 1996: 1). However, there are multiple ways of understanding and practicing sovereignty across Indigenous and Southern ontologies (see Parasram 2023), not all of which reproduce the violence of imperial state sovereignty.
5. Defined as "self-affirmation and expression by an autonomous entity" (Grovogui 1996: 1).
6. Building on, but diverting in emphasis from, Slobodian's (2022) view of neoliberalism as a counterrevolution against *democracy*.
7. See Reus-Smit and Towns in the lead chapter for this section.
8. See also work by Arun Kundnani (2021: 52), who argues that "neoliberalism produces its own distinctive structures of racial oppression," and Robbie Shilliam (2021) on neoliberalism and race.
9. As Jessica Whyte documents, the Society's statement of aims cautioned that the "central values of civilization are in danger"; Hayek lamented the "actual decay of civilization"; and Röpke warned that the "spirit of the barbarians" might destroy "the civilizing work of all these centuries [of Western colonialism]" (see Whyte 2019: 35).
10. See e.g. Tansel (2019) and Patnaik and Patnaik (2021) for analyses of, and alternatives to, this common misdiagnosis.
11. See e.g. Andaiye (2020); Beckford (1999); Best (1968); Perry (2022).
12. The 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held in Egypt in November 2022.

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CHAPTER 23

RACIAL ORDERS

CLIVE GABAY

An introduction to racial orders

It is particularly apt to think about race as a fundamental logic of international order. This is because, as much as every social media storm about who said what to whom and when might make us think otherwise, race is inherently the construct of a system of power, with rac*ism* and racialization its output. In this sense, we can understand racism as the systemic and structural power to create groups of people whose lives are valued less than other groups. It is this process of group creation and undervaluation that we can understand as *racialization* (Omi and Winant 1986: 111); that is, we are not born "white," "black," "brown," and so on but come to be those identities via a process that differentially situates (racializes) us in a social hierarchy in relation to each other (Bhatt acharyya 2018). As such, racism is not bigotry or prejudice devoid of power but is the power to produce racialization and undervaluation, embedded in "beliefs, practices and policies reflective of and supported by institutional power, primarily state power" (Hen derson 2015: 20). In this chapter, I will add to and broaden this definition out from state power to think about how transnational actors also produce racial order beyond the state. I will also broaden this definition out beyond institutional power in order to think about a complex interplay of institutional power, knowledge, and unfolding historical processes. The key thread, however, will be power; racism as a system of power, embedded in everyday "grammars" (Bonilla da Silva 2012), or ways of knowing, that impoverishes and commits deathly violence against those considered to be less than fully human, less deserving of rights, less deserving of dignity.

As this chapter unfolds, it will certainly cleave very closely, even indistinguishably, from the scholarship cited in the framing chapter to this section, which rests on "an insistence that the central ordering at stake is not one among states but one among groupings of humans who are racialized and placed in racial hierarchies that are transnationally reproduced, resisted and restructured" (see Reus-Smit and Towns this volume). I will argue that race is a social construct; that it was born of power, extermination, and enslavement; and that we can comprehend much of what we understand as "the international" in today's world as a product of racially produced ordering. My approach to these issues has increasingly been informed by, and sometimes sits in tension with, my own sense of self. I identify as Jewish and am considered as such

by other people who identify as Jewish. The ways others recognize me, however, is not primarily because of how I *choose* to identify but rather because of the ways in which many people who identify as Jewish (but by no means all) recognize their Jewishness, and the Jewishness of others (i.e. me), as a question of biological heredity rather than self-identification. Indeed, according to all mainstream, and even not-so-mainstream, denominations of modern Judaism, what I think about the matter of my Jewishness myself doesn't matter very much at all, compared to whether I have Jewish parentage.[1] How, then, does this sit with an insistence that racial identity is a product of racialization rather than biology? For Jews have certainly been, and continue to be, racialized (Gabay 2022). At the same time, biologically speaking, Jewish blood spreads far and wide, well beyond those racialized as and identifying as Jews (Baker 2017: 147). On the other hand, Nazi modes of Jewish racialization incorporated more people as Jews than the majority of Jewish denominations do today (working forward from one grandparent of any gender rather than the matrilineal and/or patrilineal parental lines that contemporary Jewish denominations work from). Clearly, Jewish racialization is fluid then, and not simply the product of what those who identify as Jewish think about it. I dwell on this because it is indicative of how processes of racialization more generally, and the grammars of race they produce, are fluid.

To take the example of Jewishness further, this fluidity not only works *on* Jews but also through them. Indeed, debates over how to racially classify Jews, which have a long genealogy (Feldman 2013) and are ongoing (Appiah 2020), often land not only on Jews to racialize them as such but also within Jewish spaces to racialize some people as Jews and others as not Jewish/not Jewish enough (Bush 2021). These kinds of distinctions and arguments rest on a largely Eurocentric understanding of who a Jew is and start to stretch and snap when we broaden that definition out. My own family history points to this, for even though today I largely present as white, and accrue the privileges attached to that form of racialization, my twentieth-century Arab Jewish family did not, being placed firmly on the "dark" side of the global color line when a British consular official in Aleppo in 1922 rendered them as "prolific Orientals" and refused their applications for British subjecthood (UK National Archive). And yet even here, the racializing process that unfolded in Aleppo did not place my family on the "dark" side of the global color line (Du Bois 1903) because they were Jewish; they were placed there because they were "Orientals" and racialized as such. The same today might be said for Black Jews who experience racism in predominantly white Jewish spaces (Bush 2021); they do not undergo this experience as people racialized as Jews but as people racialized as Black. Such is the mutability of race, however, and the international and transnational boundaries that it draws, that it has not always been the case that white Jews have been racialized as white. I will return to this later on in the chapter when I discuss how racial orders travel through time and space.

The global color line, and its mutability, is something that today confronts more and more people who have never had to think about it before. This chapter is written in

London, against a backdrop of unfolding protests across many white-majority states concerning the equal value of black lives, and a global pandemic that in the United Kingdom kills Black and other racialized as not-white people out of proportion to their percentage of the overall population (ONS 2020). It is not uncommon to hear British politicians, political observers, and commentators argue that racism in the United States is far worse than it is in the United Kingdom (Phillips 2016: 27–28), the implication being that anti-racists in the United Kingdom should perhaps pipe down and be grateful that "there go I but for the grace of God." Putting aside the debate over whether the United States is more racist than the United Kingdom, if the material conditions of US racism are largely a product of a system of slavery that dates back to the sixteenth century, and in which the constituent parts of the modern British state (and other European states) were the major protagonists and beneficiaries, then can we say that the US problem with racism is also a British, and more broadly, European problem?

What does it mean to say that US racism is also European racism? It is easiest of all to say what this does *not* mean. It does *not* mean that the experiences of racialized minorities in the United States and the United Kingdom are the same. It is by many measures more deadly to be Black in the United States than it is in the United Kingdom (which is not to say, as with the COVID-19 pandemic, that it cannot also be deadly in the United Kingdom: ONS 2020). It is also true, however, that the United States has had a Black president, while in 2010, a higher proportion of Black people in Britain were incarcerated compared to Black people in the United States (Ramesh 2010). In some areas, Black life seems to be more valued in the United States than it does in the United Kingdom. For instance, a number of Black British and other racialized actors have decided to make their careers in the United States because of their experiences of racism in UK film and TV production.[2]

So, to ask that question again, what does it mean to suggest that US racism is also European racism (and perhaps vice versa)? To address this question, we need to explore the way that ideas about race travel across boundaries, mutating to local and concrete contexts but remaining entangled with other contexts with which they are related. These boundaries include the ones we would normally consider (i.e. international borders that delineate one state's jurisdiction from that of another) but also include historical, cultural, economic, and linguistic boundaries; the divisions many of us more or less consciously use to make sense of and demarcate the world around us. The fuzziness of these boundaries can be seen in the example of "the English-speaking world," which accords with but also escapes what scholars have identified in political discourse as the "Anglosphere" (Bell and Vucetic 2019). This is one example of a common demarcation that does not neatly map onto formal state boundaries and shared cultural norms, for while the proponents of this term in UK politics regularly invoked it in support of the "Yes" campaign for Brexit (as an alternative trading bloc to the European Union: Robert s 2020), what they really meant when they invoked it was the *white* English-speaking world, summoning New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and sometimes the United States

(all Anglo-settler colonies, all with significant Indigenous and racialized populations) in their vision of a future global system of trade and allyship. The actual "English speaking world," however, obviously far exceeds this largely racialized understanding of British historical ties to other parts of the world. Taken in full, we would have to include Britain's former colonies and imperial possessions in the Caribbean, South Asia, Southern Africa, East Africa, West Africa, and so on. The point here is to illustrate the degree to which even those visions that transcend state boundaries and invoke cosmopolitan imaginations of allyship and partnership can still rest on and/or be intimately intertwined with racial and imperial grammars. Indeed, racist-world making has a long and storied cosmopolitan tradition, with agents of white nationalism (Geary, Schofield, and Sutton 2020) and white world-ism (Stoddard 1922), long seeking out audiences, building networks, and developing racializing political projects well beyond their immediate domestic and national settings.

This chapter moves through three stages. First of all, it traces the historical development of racial grammars and the relationship between these grammars and racist outcomes/the racialization of entire groups of people (many of whom may have little to do with each other linguistically, culturally, or ethnically at the point of racialization: Hall 1977; Hartman 2007). Despite commonsensical ideas that racism is just an intrinsic part of human nature as old as humanity itself, and that "everyone's a little bit racist" (Tartaglia 2003), the first part of the chapter suggests that racism is, first of all, a system of power, one that specifically locates power within particular groups racialized as superior to other groups (where the idea of distinct social groups itself might be a product of this system of power). In definitional terms, this makes racism distinct from prejudice and discrimination and has a very specific historical provenance, the denial of which (through the suggestion that it's just natural) masks the historical conditions that produced racism as a system of power and that racism continues to produce, socially and economically, through and within different contexts.[3] The next part of the chapter explores the way in which racial grammars that differentiate groups of people along lines of difference and value travel, and have thus become an ordering principle of international politics intersecting with, productive of, and produced through economic and gendered sets of dynamics. Finally, the chapter reflects on what all of these arguments mean for how we study a world that is ordered by race and racism, relationally and iteratively.

A HISTORY OF RACE, RACISM, AND RACIALIZATION AS AN ORDERING PRINCIPLE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Scholars have, of course, offered different accounts of where and when we need to locate the origins of race as an ordering principle of the international. Much of this depends on whether we understand the emergence of race to be congruent with the

emergence of rac*ism* as an explicit means of sorting humanity along an increasingly biological set of dividing lines (although these lines arguably only became biologically fixed with the emergence of the field of eugenics in the nineteenth century). The historian Theodore Allen, for instance, argued that racialization, as understood by the emergence of the words "white" and "Black," can be traced back to the efforts of Virginian planters to divide their indentured European laborers from their African slaves (Allen 1997). These two groups had been increasingly working together through a series of slave rebellions in the latter half of the seventeenth century in the Virginian colony. Planters thus legislated that "white" workers (codified for the first time as white, rather than English, Irish, and so on) could accrue certain privileges and freedoms denied to "Black" slaves (now no longer African), with the former's privileges increasingly painted as being under threat from the latter's struggles for freedom (Dabiri locates these processes in the same period to the plantation economies of the Caribbean: Dabiri 2021).

At this point, it is helpful to distinguish racism from prejudice and discrimination. As social actors, we are all prone to be socialized into holding difference prejudices. Our favorite choice of ice cream flavor, our proclivity for certain kinds of music, or a whole range of other preferences are the product of processes of socialization, the combinations of spoken and unspoken influences we imbibe from our early years onwards. This obviously also extends to who we most closely identify with and can map on to our views of people who we don't consider we have so much in common with, even resulting in the projection of our fears and anxieties on to certain groups of people. Associating whole groups of people, and then individuals we associate with them, with particular characteristics might appear to be a component of racism, but it would be more accurate to call this prejudice. It is when our location as an individual, or as part of a group within a social field of power, positions us to act discriminately on these prejudices and on these "Othered" groups that prejudice moves into racism. Integral to racism, then, is a relationship of domination.

In practice, this means that we should not confuse a bigoted remark or a prejudiced view (as bad, unwelcome, and individually hurtful as it may be) with racism, *unless* such a view or remark plays into, or is produced by, a broader set of discourses and political structures that act to systematically discriminate against and harm the particular groups of people represented in that individual comment or view. This helps us to understand racism not simply as a speech act, or prejudiced view, but rather as a logic of power and domination, where the former, of course, often intersects with the latter. This is what helps us understand the division of "Black" and "white" workers in the Virginia plantation economy as racist: not because of the characteristics that were codified to being white or Black in that context on their own but because this assignation led to one of these groups being deserving of a qualified freedom and the other being seen as less-than-human and thus undeserving of that freedom. It was the effects of this racialized coding, rather than the coding itself, which made this process of demarcation racist; and

it could only be racist because the people who generated this coding were structurally empowered to act on it.

Like Allen, quite often scholars of race and racism conflate the emergence of whiteness, or the conquest of the Americas starting with 1492, with the emergence of race as an ordering principle (Gabay 2018: ch. 1; see also Geary, Schofield, and Sutton 2020: 3). However, treating race and racism as a logic of power and domination that produces people as more and less deserving/human according to their assigned (not natural) group identity makes it possible to track racism back prior to the emergence of familiar terms that we tie to ideas about race, such as "white" and "Black." It is helpful to think about racism therefore as a 'grammar' (Bonilla da Silva 2012). Much like how the rules of linguistic grammars might structure how different phenomena are given meaning within a specific language with its own grammatical rules, so we might say that there is a racial grammar that flows from the effects of racism as a system of power and that exists at a more subterranean level than the particularities of categories like "white" and "Black," and where and how they emerged, might suggest. In this sense, then, we might say that racial orders are reproduced not necessarily, or even mostly, via direct forms of violence and/or coercion but via a grammar that frames how race does or doesn't get seen in social phenomena, how matters get understood as being race-related (or not), and even how we feel about race and racism (Bonilla da Silva 2012: 174). This is not to necessarily argue for the primacy of race as a category of social and political explanation. Rather, it is to suggest that grammars of difference and hierarchy that animate "the disciplining and ordering of bodies through gender and sexuality and dis/ability, … utilise the logics of race, regardless of the targeted population" (Bhattacharyya 2018: 1). To put this slightly differently, instances and systems of patriarchy, for instance, may emerge independently of other forms of domination, but all forms of domination are embedded in the hierarchical ordering principles of race, even while retaining their own particularities of application.

Race as a structuring grammar of power thus might date back to an earlier time than the work of scholars such as Theodore Allen suggests. It might similarly date back earlier than that suggested by work that locates the emergence of the modern world, structured by colonial epistemologies of social hierarchy and ordering, in the encounter between Christopher Columbus and Indigenous nations in the Americas in 1492 (i.e. Mignolo 2007; Todorov 1984). Such literature suggests that Columbus's encounters in 1492 gave him an experience of difference upon which to justify the subsequent genocidal policies visited by the conquistadors upon the peoples of the Americas during the "discovery" of the "New World." As such, we should be asking where a way of knowing, or a social grammar, that saw difference as a means to exert power and erasure came from. What ways of knowing meant that Columbus was never able to see the evidence of humanity in front of him; that his conviction about the degenerative nature of "the Indian" was "always anterior to the experience" and that his notion of the people he saw as simultaneously "noble" and "barbaric" rested on a "failure to recognise the

Indians, and the refusal to admit them as a subject having the same rights as oneself, but different" (Todorov 1984: 20, 49)?

Columbus's view of those he encountered in the Americas was informed by a broader European Christian context embedded in the "divide between Light and Darkness drawn in scripture and religious practice." This was later (from the European Enlightenment) to metamorphose "into Civilisation and Barbarism" (Pasha 2017: 328). According to Pasha, this pre-Enlightenment lineage of Euro-Christian colonial epistemology has been largely erased in the critical interrogation of how racializing grammars (that may pre-date the emergence of race as an explicit concept) structure international social and political ordering. As such, "the critique of Westphalia or Scientific Racism escapes the crucial, 'foundational' role of religion in cartographies of difference" (Pasha 2017: 328). Perhaps, one reason for why some extant scholarship on race and international order reinforces a secular narrative of pre-Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment difference (based on an apparent transition from the former's irrationality to the latter's rationality) is that it can be relatively straightforward to trace the ways that racial grammars travelled around the world in the post-Enlightenment period, buttressed by imperial expansions underpinned by "reason" and "science."[4] The story of pre-Enlightenment, and then pre-modern racial grammars, however, is messy and nonlinear.

For instance, at the same time that the Roman Church was ordering the conduct of the Crusades across the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, a murderous phenomenon that precisely accords to Pasha's location of racial grammars in Euro-Christian epistemologies of difference, other European Christians were encountering, adopting, and enjoying the cultures, practices, foods, languages, and poetry of Muslim and syncretic Andalusian traditions that seeped over the Pyrenees into Christian Europe. That the Crusades were, in themselves, partly a response to the very syncretism of those Andalusian traditions (Menocal 2003: 118–125) is important but does not change the fact that racial grammars, and the worlds they were ordering, although present in pre-Modern and pre-Enlightenment Europe, were less universal and more fluid than they were to later become.

In his magisterial work, *Black Marxism*, Cedric Robinson helps us to understand how these pre-Enlightenment and more fluid ideas about difference are, first of all, embedded in a racial grammar and then later universalized. For Robinson, each transition in how racial grammars form, and who and how they racialize different groups, are a product of the "political and material exigencies" (Robinson 1983: 66) of different periods. Importantly for this chapter, it is not, according to Robinson, capitalism that creates racialization. While, arguably, the current system of global racial ordering that emerges out of the plantation economies of the sixteenth century is embedded in capitalist expansion, capitalism itself was, according to Robinson, fundamentally embedded in racialized tendencies from its inception. This is because capitalism, for Robinson, emerges *from* a feudal system that is based on hierarchical difference making, rather than representing a rupture with/from it, the latter logic being a classically Marxist position

(Robinson 1983: 10). Robinson thus argues that "Racism … was not simply a convention for ordering the relations of European to non-European peoples but has its genesis in the internal relations of European peoples … The development, organization, and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions" (Robinson 1983: 2).[5] For Robinson then, it is a racial grammar emerging directly from feudalism that structures the social (class) divisions that characterize capitalism. To illustrate this, Robinson suggests that pre-capitalist forms of Anglo-Saxon chauvinism are central to the "rather extreme forms of racism among the English working class" that emerged in the nineteenth century, and that "determined the form and characteristics that English working-class consciousness assumed." Robinson cites the Marxist historian George Rudé, who noted (Rudé, quoted in Robinson 1983: 34) that

> one of the most remarkably persistent beliefs of all was that perfect 'Liberties' had existed under the Saxon Kings and that these had been filched, together with their lands, from 'freeborn' Englishmen by the invading Norman knights under William the Bastard in 1066. This myth of the 'Norman Yoke' persisted until Chartist times [1840s]' … [This] eventually took the form of nationalism, but more particularly as a nationalism incorporating a virulent xenophobia.

With the increasingly radical tone of Irish working-class nationalist movements, the English working classes turned this Anglo-Saxon racial grammar onto Irish laborers, who were positioned as a threat both to English working-class wages and, more pertinently for this analysis, English national identity (Robinson 1983: 41).

Robinson thus identifies a racial grammar which is used to structure both the composition and self-understanding of English working classes that far pre-dates their emergence, and the industrial-capitalist conditions that produced them. Robinson locates the genesis of this grammar within the beginnings of "European civilization," which coheres with the reappearance of urban life at the end of the first Christian millennium (which was itself informed by the expansion of Muslim rule in the Iberian Peninsula from the eighth century, and the city-states [Taifas] that emerged out of the dissolution of the Cordoban Caliphate in 1031: Menocal 2003: 79–91). The medieval nobles that ruled over these new cities justified their power through imagined histories that narrated themselves as having distinct racial origins from those whom they ruled over (Robinson 1983: 67). The emergence of the bourgeoisie from the twelfth century was, in itself, also a product of racialized exclusion; many members of this nascent class were not free-born and were in flight from their lords. Because they were wandering, most people viewed them as dangerous foreigners, thus further occasioning their mobility. And yet it was this very mobility, produced by a racial grammar that understood them as "Other," that allowed them to transport merchandise from town to town, capitalizing also on the frequent ruptures of town and country life that occurred as feudal lords exerted their power over more sedentary populations (Robinson 1983: 14). Later still, the emergence

of European merchant capital (between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries) saw the reproduction of these racialized social conventions, finally incorporating African labor on "the same terms through which it had earlier absorbed Irish labor" (Robinson 1983: 67).

What this foundational scholarship from Robinson tells us is that the racial grammar that produces more and less fixed social hierarchies can transcend physical appearance and is more likely to rest on ideas of essential differences that are then projected onto particular groups of people, who are subsequently embedded in a hierarchical power structure. For instance, a simple online search will reveal an ongoing and lively discussion among members of various African diasporas who report of their discombobulation of arriving in the United Kingdom, the United States, India, China, etc. and suddenly becoming "Black" (Edozien 2014). Indeed, the racialization of Blackness is not limited to what might be considered as the "usual suspects" of the United Kingdom and the United States and can be seen in the record of anti-Black racism in, for instance, China too (Pai 2020). This speaks to the mobility of race and racialization, which I will discuss in the next section. As already discussed, racialization is a phenomenon that creates essential categories and groups where none necessarily existed before and which operates as a socially ordering logic beyond categories of skin color. This is not a new idea and has been recognized by giants of the field of the sociology of race, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, who, upon vising the site of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1949 and considering the Nazi racialization of Jews, wrote that "the problem of slavery, emancipation and caste … was not … solely a matter of color and physical and racial characteristics" (Du Bois 2004: 45–46).

In this section, we have dwelt on the ways in which an often backgrounded grammar of race structures the social world. This discussion, however, has more-or-less centered itself in Europe and North America and is thus open to a criticism of privileging and exporting parochial geopolitical categories (in this case, "race") that do not necessarily have universal purchase (Walzer 2020). The following section grapples with this criticism in order to illustrate that precisely because racial grammars are not limited to skin color, they travel far and wide and provide an explanatory framework in which we can understand all kinds of social and political ordering around the world.

How race travels across time and space

Racialization is the process by which a collection of people become identified as a group and are then treated as such by others, and indeed even identify as such themselves. As discussed above, this becomes a process of racialization when power can then be exerted against that group based on assigned differences. This is racism, and these differences may, and indeed often are, based on skin color, which, in themselves, may mutate in significance and meaning over time. In *Lose Your Mother*, a personal and

moving treatise on slavery and identity, the historian Saidiya Hartman (2007) highlights the ways in which racialization can always be "on the move," even and especially within the subjects of racialization themselves. In exploring the movement of African-Americans enamored with their African, pre-enslavement pasts, she finds that there is no going back to some kind of collective pan-African identity that may or may not have existed prior to enslavement. The ongoing post-slavery neocolonial impoverishment of Africa, and the relative wealth of those African Americans that could travel to and even start lives in countries like Ghana, made those same travelers start to question their *African*-American-ness. "I've been here too long to call myself anything except a black American," claims one of Hartman's protagonists, underscoring the ways in which race is something that is made within the clutches of power and hierarchy rather than something that necessarily operates on a descriptive level (and which would unite the descendants of African slaves with contemporary Ghanaians via their shared "African-ness," or even their shared "Blackness") (Hartman 2007: 29).

These are issues that arise from the ways in which groups of people who are ascertained to share similar hues of skin are projected into a racial hierarchy, which is then remade through various sites of power into assumed transnational and national communities that sit in tension with each other. However, skin color alone is not the only predictor of racialization. As the product of a racial grammar that produces real social hierarchies, skin color has not been, and is not, always the basis for racialization. I'll take myself as an example (again!). My parents were both Jewish. My mother's family originated in what is today Ukraine, and, like millions of others, fled West to escape the jaws of state-sanctioned pogroms against Jewish communities at the beginning of the twentieth century. I don't know whether they passed through Germany, although it is likely that they would have done. In Germany, they might have been availed of the support of established and largely assimilated German-Jewish communities, offering food, clothing, and some warmth. At the same time, these communities were keen to move "Eastern Jews" through and away from Germany, eager to disassociate themselves from "their poor 'primitive' coreligionists" (Elon 2003: 260). In this sense, German Jews were seeking to escape racialization, and in doing so contributed to that self-same racialization that would eventually come to claim them in the 1930s and 1940s. Indeed, in their enthusiasm to establish this difference from their Eastern-European co-religionists, some German Jews even invented distant and distinct Sephardic (Spanish-Jewish) genealogies (Elon 2003: 260).

As this branch of my family arrived in the United Kingdom, they were met by the British State's first act of immigration control, the Aliens Act of 1905, supported by the pre-existing and assimilated British Jewish communal bodies (Rosenberg 2011), designed specifically to put a check on "racially polluting" Eastern European Jews. The prime minister who shepherded this act of Parliament was Arthur (Lord) Balfour, the very same who signed the 1917 Balfour Declaration that pledged British support to the creation of a Jewish settlement in Palestine. That Balfour did the latter was entirely

related to his support for the 1905 act. Balfour exhibited the racial grammar within which Euro-Christianity placed Eastern European Jews when he wrote that a Jewish settlement in Palestine might "mitigate the age-long miseries created for Western civilization by the presence in its midst of a Body which it too long regarded as alien and even hostile, but which it was equally unable to expel or to absorb" (Cohen 2014: 11). This racialization of Jews as the "Other" within was one that was incorporated into Jewish self-understanding. We have already seen this with the actions of assimilated German and British Jews faced with large-scale Eastern European Jewish immigration. It is also worth noting that other significant Jewish figures shared this racialized (self-)understanding. Theodor Herzl, the protagonist of modern political Zionism, wrote in *Der Judenstat* (*The Jewish State*) (Herzl 1896: 11) that

> The "assimilated" would profit even more than Christian citizens by the departure of faithful Jews; for they would be rid of the disquieting, incalculable, and unavoidable rivalry of a Jewish proletariat, driven by poverty and political pressure from place to place, from land to land. This floating proletariat would become stationary. Many Christian citizens—whom we call Anti-Semites—can now offer determined resistance to the immigration of foreign Jews. Jewish citizens cannot do this, although it affects them far more nearly; for on them they feel first of all the keen competition of individuals carrying on similar branches of industry, who, in addition, either introduce Anti-Semitism where it does not exist, or intensify it where it does.

These views, shared by Jew[6] and non-Jew, had their full realization during the Holocaust, during which 6 million Jews, and 5 million other Roma, people identified as disabled, and gay people, categorized as biologically inferior no matter the color of their skin or projected (lack of) humanity, were murdered. And yet (and because of this), in the aftermath of the Holocaust, European Jews, especially those European Jews willing to forego their Eastern European ancestral traditions and communalism/outward shows of religiosity, were very swiftly reconstructed as epitomes of good racial relations and as loyal and well integrated citizens of the countries in which they had settled (Slabodsky 2014: 17). Jews with light skin, like my mother's family, rapidly became a model minority that in day-to-day life also became increasingly coded as white, eventually transcending the kinds of everyday racism faced by other minorities in the workplace, schooling, health care, and so on, to which they had initially also been subjected.

And yet, Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the UK Labour Party between 2015 and 2019, which was characterized by serial instances and allegations of antisemitism, and after which the Party was found by a UK statutory body (the Equalities and Human Rights Commission) to be "institutionally antisemitic" (EHRC 2020), has shown that the category of "Jew" reworks itself through grammars of racialization that remain reflected in a broader "reservoir of readily available images and ideas that subsist" in political

culture (Gidley, McGeever, and Feldman 2020). Even (and perhaps especially) those who thought they were defending "Jews" from Labour Party antisemitism relied on problematic tropes that constructed Jews as categorical, in various instances arguing that Jews were genetically distinct, forming a particular racial and genetic group that was "not white" (see Gabay 2022).

All of the above shows how racialized groups can be de- or re-racialized, and can de and re-racialize themselves, at various historical conjunctures, fitting back into and then escaping particular racial grammars, thus illustrating the fluidity of race as a category and racialization as a process. Clearly de/racialization might be more possible where the racialized group in question can present itself with lighter skin, and thus qualify in certain times and places (although not all) as white (or indeed, as Black—see James Davis (1991) on the "one-drop" rule in the United States). What this does reveal, however, is the ways in which racial grammars might work to racialize all sorts of groups, no matter the color of their skin or the degree to which they conform to commonly accepted (although deeply problematic) understandings of race as a natural phenomenon. This allows us to move from the fluidity of race in a temporal register to the fluidity of race in a spatial or geographical register, particularly in the contemporary period, where the advent of national populists of every color around the world might appear to put the universality of racial ordering into question.

This is, indeed, one common rejoinder to the universalization of race as an explanatory factor in international ordering; that the category of race represents a parochial European and North American experience and can thus not explain religious, caste, or regional forms of discrimination, oppression, and exploitation. At the time of writing, a prominent scholarly exponent of this position on the left has been the political theorist Michael Walzer, who has argued that because Chinese workers are exploited by the Chinese Communist Party, and because the most exploited groups in Russia are Caucasian Muslims, we cannot properly talk about racial capitalism and thus cannot talk about race as an ordering principle of international order (Walzer 2020). In response, Julian Go suggests that Walzer's analysis overlooks the global dimensions of capitalism, whereby the majority of the world's working classes are workers of color (Go 2020: 8).

Go's response is certainly a helpful argument, but what I want to suggest here is that, in actual fact, Walzer unwittingly provides the evidence for the fluid and traveling nature of racial grammars in any case. This is because Walzer is wedded to a phenotypical understanding of race. He writes, for instance, that "If the Chinese imported white workers to take on the most menial jobs, that might make Chinese capitalism 'racial' " and that had there been no African slaves, "the recruitment of Irish workers would have started much earlier than it did" (Walzer 2020), thus making African slavery incidental, rather than necessary to the emergence of capitalism. In this formulation, Irish workers become a nonracialized category, presumably because the color of their skin is somehow neutral, as opposed to that of African slaves, which is not.[7] The argument I have made in this chapter, however, is that racialization is a process that rests on a particular grammar

of difference that has historically been applied (and, in the case of white-presenting Jews, has been inconsistently disapplied) to all kinds of groups, no matter what they look like, in order to place them in a social, political, and economic hierarchy that functions in ways to do that group harm. The skin color of those being exploited in this hierarchy is not necessarily central to the harm that they receive, as long as that harm gets progressively justified by those with the power to do harm on biological and/or (and especially from the mid-twentieth century) on cultural grounds. Indeed, as Robinson reminds us, it was a "white" group, the metropolitan Irish, who provided a grammatical template of "savagery" that African slaves were later drawn into across the Atlantic, and which also justified the murder of Native Americans and expropriation of their land, for "there was little cause to respect the claims of savages or to comprehend their resistance as anything more than savagery." Savagery, as Robinson reminds us, "travelled well" (Robinson 1983: 186–187).

Grammars that produce exploitable and oppressable groups, groups whose lives are more expendable than those not categorized as such, have their genesis (as we saw with Cedric Robinson's arguments) in Europe, what Walter Mignolo (2007) describes as the "geopolitics" of race and modernity. And while pre-Enlightenment European racial grammars could often escape the biological essentialism that was to later characterize them, it is this latter feature that travels with European racial grammars during the high point of European imperialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In example after example, we can find evidence of racially essentialist grammars becoming implanted in majority-world societies to construct violent social hierarchies where previously those hierarchies existed but in far more fluid forms. Important scholarship tells us that this is the case with Muslim–Hindu relations and Hindu nationalism in South Asia (Nandy 2003), with the post-colonial essentialism of Hutu and Tutsi identity in pre-genocide Rwanda (Mamdani 2001), with the antisemitism that became characteristic among some tiers of Islamic societies from the late nineteenth century (Stillman 2006), with ethnic essentialism and nationalism in Japan (Saaler 2016). In all of these cases and more, scholars have carefully traced the roots of racialization (the projected essentialism of certain categories of people and the placing of these categories into an often murderous social hierarchy) to the spread of ideas and the modes of divide-and-rule governance that came with European imperialism. All of these cases are evidence of how racial grammars have traveled. For Walzer, and indeed in common sense, it might seem strange to consider the Rwanda Genocide of 1994 as a product of European white supremacy. And yet the roots of anti-Tutsi racism were embedded in colonial methods of divide and rule that biologically essentialized divisions in ways that were previously largely absent from pre-colonial Rwanda (Mamdani 2001). This resulted from a grammar that directly built off ideas of European racial supremacy transposed into first German and then Belgian Rwanda. In this way, we can see how the European racial grammars in which white supremacy is embedded are of direct relevance to a consideration of the roots of the genocide in Rwanda.

What we often take to be "domestic" racial hierarchies and orders are thus often constituted via transnational historical and spatial dimensions. Thus far, I have suggested that these orders emanate from Europe (and latterly Europe's settler colonies in the Americas, Australasia, and so on). However, a number of scholars and anti-colonial writers have long noted how the violence characteristic of twentieth-century Europe, or on the streets of militarized US cities in the twenty-first century, also have their roots in nineteenth- and twentieth-century European and US colonial practices, thus representing another way in which racial grammars and orders travel. This is what the Martiniquan poet and anti-colonial writer/politician Aimé Césaire called the Imperial "boomerang effect" (Césaire 1955),[8] which describes the ways in which the oppressive techniques developed by imperial powers to control the populations of their colonies (concentration camps, forced marches, sterilization, etc.) would eventually be turned back on the populations of the imperial centers. For instance, the methods of forced marching and corralling of people into camps that characterized aspects of the Nazi Holocaust can be seen to derive from the early twentieth-century German genocide against the Herero and Nama peoples of modern day Namibia and the concentration camps used by the British in their war against the Boers in South Africa (Zimmerer 2005). Later, the engineers of what would become Apartheid in South Africa drew inspiration from a study trip to the US South in 1910 (Mamdani 2015: 608). Meanwhile, in British Mandate Palestine, the displacement and ethnic cleansing of Palestinian Muslims, Christians, and Bedouin from parts of what became Israel was explicitly predicated on the precedent of the history of American settlement and Indigenous extermination. Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, went on record in 1915 to paint the mission of Jewish settlers as one of turning "the wasteland and desolation into a flourishing … oasis, as did the English settlers in North America," extolling the "herculean … tasks of the colonists who came to find the new Homeland in the New World" and their "fierce … fights … with wild nature and wilder redskins, the sacrifices made before they unlocked the continent for mass influx and colonization" (Ben Gurion, quoted in Viterbo 2017; for contemporary comparisons to the "New World" by Israeli lawmakers, see Mamdani 2015: 610).

In very grounded terms, Julian Go illustrates the ways in which the reformation of policing in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was explicitly informed by the experiences of veterans of the United States' "imperial military apparatus" in the Philippines, who, on their return to the United States, took up positions in various urban police forces and viewed the urban populations under their remits as analogous to the colonial populations they had returned from, transferring tactics from the latter to the former. These were practices forged through the racialization of subject populations, where "metropolitan spaces [in the United States] with large or rising numbers of minorities" became "racialized as inferior, denied equal treatment" and appeared "to pose threats to the dominant order—perceptions that [were] also legitimated by racial ideologies, just as in the colonies" (Go 2020: 1211).[9] This has obvious echoes with contemporary urban policing in the United States and beyond.

Perhaps one of the most visceral examples of the boomerang in action is that of the white supremacist terrorist Dylann Roof, murderer of nine African Americans at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, North Carolina in 2015. An image of Roof released after the attack shows him standing, sullen, with two badges stitched into his coat, one of the white supremacist Southern Rhodesian state and the other of the white supremacist Apartheid South African state. Both of these states had ceased to exist before Roof had been born in 1994. Racial grammars and the orders of violence and value they produce travel across time and space.

What this means for how we study the world

Understanding the world as being ordered by race and racism, and branching out from that starting point into a research agenda, is an iterative process. There is a great deal of evidence that might lead us to conclude that racial grammars continue to order the world, but in order to fully see these logics in play we need to be alive to the history and present of racial ordering. This is because, analytically, we risk missing a great deal if we reduce racial ordering to its historical forms of formal empire, literal bodily extermination, and so on. Racial logics take on new forms and vehicles all the time (Bhattacharyya 2018: 1), and if racial grammars produce racialization and racism as a set of structuring violent logics, then it would make sense that these structures would be malleable and flexible in order to persist and survive through various modes of resistance, anti-racism, and decolonization.

Racial ordering today mostly doesn't parade as naked white supremacy, with jackboots and swastikas, even if, in the early decades of the twenty-first century, we have seen the re-emergence of some of these forces. And yet racial ordering continues to explain some of the world's most pressing issues at the time of writing. As the world continues to grapple with the experiences and aftermaths of the COVID-19 pandemic, research programs starting from the position of international racial ordering (Papamichail 2023) would, and do, ask questions about why it was that the map of countries that initially opposed relaxing intellectual property restrictions on COVID-19 vaccine production largely conformed to former European imperial centers and their satellite settler colonies.

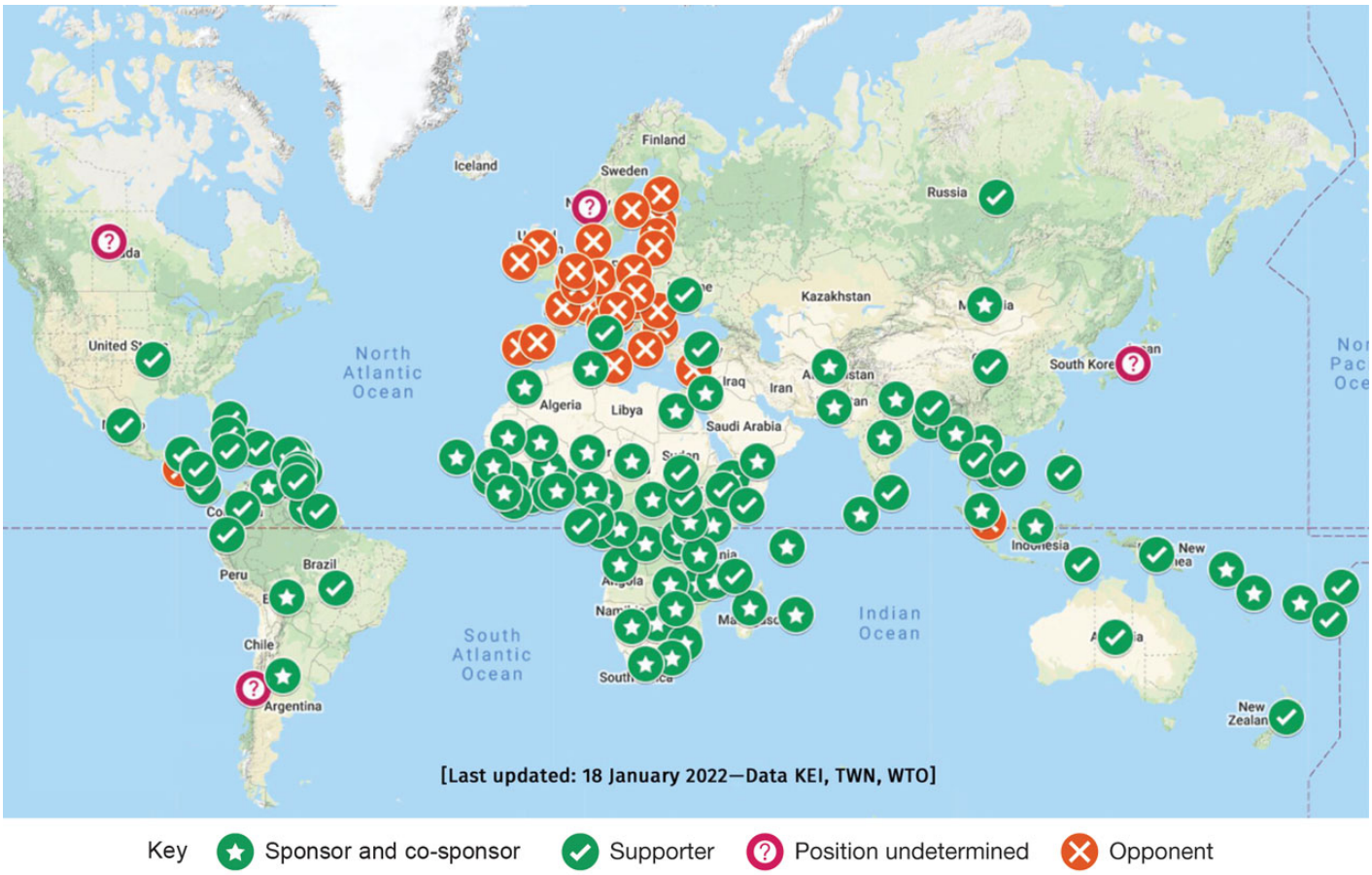

FIGURE 23.1 Countries' positions on waving monopolies for the COVID-19 medical tool

Source: Médecins sans Frontières (n.d.).

Even though this opposition began to shift over time, the point, as with racism more generally, is not whether individual actors (in the case of COVID vaccinations, governments) hold on to or relinquish certain amounts of power within any given context but about how that context comes to be in the first place. The question that could be asked of the map in Figure 23.1, then, is not about what will change with enough pressure/moral reflection but how the map came into being in the first place. How did the power over life and death come to be ordered in this configuration, and what does it have to do with race?

Other projects do, and would, ask questions about how and why European bordering regimes create violent and deathly outcomes for African, Arab, and South Asian migrants but not Canadian or Australian migrants (El-Enany 2020; Walia 2021; Danewid 2021) or about how and why it is that climate catastrophe is already destroying lives and livelihoods in parts of the world that were formerly colonized (Sealey-Huggins 2018) or parts of countries where populations largely descend from the formerly enslaved (Hardy, Milligan, and Heynen 2017). Why, these projects would and do ask, do some lives appear to be more structurally expendable than others (Bhattacharyya 2018: 1)? How have logics of expendability changed over time, and why? To what degree do these logics of expendability relate to racial ordering and intersect with, and produce, other

related and inter-constitutive forms of ordering, such as patriarchal and ableist grammars (Puar 2017)?

Another important set of questions relate to how racial logics and grammars act beyond borders to order even those phenomena for which the taken-for-granted explanation is both domestic and absent of an analysis of race. Some pertinent recent examples of these analyses relate to the seemingly domestic issues of Brexit and the presidencies of Donald Trump, Jair Bolsonaro, Narendra Modi, and other right-wing and proto-fascist authoritarians. Major intellectual currents have argued that, for instance, the vote for Brexit was largely driven by grievances that can be reduced to an intersection of domestic class and ethnic and geographical phenomena (Goodwin and Heath 2016) or that the emergence of Donald Trump related to domestic US class politics (Pollack 2016). And yet, we may well ask how these forces and phenomena relate to and constitute each other through space as responses to anti-racist progress (Shilliam 2018; Shwarz 2020; Danewid 2021), as well as through time, informed by transnational networks of ideas and individuals working to generate institutional responses that maintain the status quo domestically and internationally, with resultant physical and structural violence that operates beyond borders (Geary, Schofield, and Sutton 2020).

Importantly, researching international order through race should not mean surrendering to and reproducing the hegemonic power of racial logics and grammars. This is because a world ordered by race is not the only world available to us. As the framing chapter to this section on international orders notes, there is a growing scholarship in International Political Sociology and beyond (most notably from scholars working in and with Indigenous intellectual traditions and practices—see for instance, Simpson 2014; Estes 2019) that acknowledges the power of racial ordering while "simultaneously decentering its allegedly European core and foundations, centering instead the multitude of experiences, ways of being and epistemologies of communities that are typically made invisible or peripheral in Eurocentrist knowledge production and modern/colonial ordering processes" (Reus-Smit and Towns 2023). In studying a world ordered by race, our ethical concern must be anti-racist. In this way, studying a racially grammared and ordered world must strive to locate worlds that take us beyond this mode of world-ordering, making attempts not to simply tell of the violence alone, which risks instantiating said violence into an ossified story of international order and global history, but instead to engage in the writing of "potential histories." These potential histories might "make impossible the transmutation of this violence into history" and "keep alive a collective disobedience" (Azoulay 2019: 286) to the violence of racial grammars, ordering, sorting, and rule.

Notes

1. Most Jewish denominations are matrilineal, although some are patrilineal also.

2. For an example, see this interview by the British film actor and writer Daniel Kaluuya: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRfUpFul32o, accessed October 31, 2024.
3. The scholar Alana Lentin calls this denialism "not-racism," and suggests that the logics underpinning this position are, in fact, highly racist (Lentin 2020).
4. The chapter picks this story up in the following section.
5. I am not, here, necessarily concerned with whether or not this was an inevitable process. For a discussion on whether racism is necessary to a *theory* of capitalism, as opposed to actually existing and historical capitalism, see Go (2020).
6. See also Feldman (2013) on the eugenicist Francis Galton's Jewish co-investigator, Joseph Jacobs, who helped facilitate Galton's study into the relationship between "Jewish phenotypes" and "Jewish characteristics," and who also published widely on this subject.
7. This argument is particularly curious, given the large amount of scholarship on anti-Irish racism in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries (Robinson 1983: 41; McVeigh 1992; Ignatiev 1995; Waters 1995), and the anti-Catholic racism that came to characterize the period of the Troubles in Northern Ireland (Cobain 2016: ch. 6), and that, indeed, has characterized US politics, the context in which Walzer is based.
8. See also Arendt (1951).
9. For a broader analysis of the role of empire and race in the making of the US state, see McCoy and Scarano (2009), and for an analysis of the colonial racial grammars that inform contemporary neoliberal state violence and carcerality, see Axter et al. (2021).

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CHAPTER 24

GENDER AND ORDER IN GLOBAL POLITICS

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INTRODUCTION

Scholars of International Relations (IR) have written at length and in a number of different ways over a long and storied disciplinary history about order and orders (see Reus-Smit and Towns, this volume). From the well-rehearsed Waltzian realist dichotomy of anarchy versus order to the neoliberal cataloguing of orders in international organization, questions of whether international order exists and what its nature may be have been among IR's key problematiques. This has been the case both for IR theory generally and for International Political Sociology specifically.

Feminist work has weighed in on the question of the relationship between gender and order in the international arena in a variety of ways as well. Early feminist IR work thought about the ways that gender bias has shaped both representation and substance across foreign policymaking and global political leadership (see e.g. Tickner 1992; Enloe 1990b; Reardon 1985; Pettman 1996). Drawing on work in feminist organization sociology (e.g. Acker 1990), feminist scholars in IR have argued that institutional cultures and structures across global politics are influenced by, and even constituted by, power relationships between and among masculinities and femininities (Sjoberg 2012, 2013; Scheyer and Kumskova 2019; Cohn 2013).[1] This work has covered orders in institutions as diverse as militaries (e.g. Lomsky-Feder and Sasson-Levy 2017), parliaments (e.g. Crewe 2014), financial institutions (e.g. Peterson 2004), and brothels (e.g. Smith 2016), to name a few.

This chapter at once reviews and looks to push forward work on gender and order in global politics. The first half of the chapter is structured around the two types of relationships between gender and order that I have engaged before—gender orders and gendered orders.[2] After discussing this set of relationships between gender and order, the chapter puts forth a theoretical exploration of how gender and order are related in global politics, inspired by a variety of interdisciplinary approaches to gender and order, rooted in political sociology.

Relationships between gender and order in global politics

In previous work, I have theorized several types of relationships between gender and order in global politics using feminist sociologists' understandings of gendered organizations as a theoretical starting point.[3] Acker (1990: 142), talking about organizations generally, explains that

> In spite of the feminist recognition that hierarchical organizations are an important location of male dominance, most feminists writing about organizations assume that the organizational structure is gender neutral … on the contrary, assumptions about gender underlie the documents and contracts used to construct organizations and provide the commonsense ground for theorizing them.

Acker (1990: 142) goes on to explain that labeling an organization or structure gendered "means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through an in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine."

In this understanding, all of those things are distributed in gendered organizations on the basis of gender. By gender, I refer to the assumptions that people will have particular characteristics and display particular behaviors not only correlated with but also caused by their membership (or perceived membership) in biological sex categories. If male and masculine are associated with particular traits, and female and feminine are associated with other (binarized) traits, genderings can be seen in the ways that these associations are integrated into social and political fabrics across the global political arena. Put simply, people seen as men are expected and assumed to be masculine, and people seen as women are expected and assumed to be feminine. The contents *both* of whom is assumed to be in biological sex categories *and* what is understood to be masculine or feminine can, and does, change across time, place, culture, and other axes. In other words, the contents of gender are not universal or unchanging, but gender itself is always there as an ordering force. Gendering, then, can "constitute a shared cognition and consensus essential in shaping our ideas and relationships" (Sjoberg 2013). This can be the case even when we are not, individually or collectively, aware of the ways in which perceptions of and expectations about gender have a role in our personal, social, and political lives (Sjoberg 2013).

Using this understanding of gender or one that is similar, feminist IR scholars have made the argument that there are a wide variety of ways in which gender is entrenched in the organization and structure of the global political arena and have provided significant empirical evidence to back up that argument. From security (e.g. Wibben 2010) to political economy (e.g. LeBaron and Roberts 2010), human rights (e.g. Ackerly 2000) to the environment (e.g. Detraz 2009), feminists have shown both that there is

significant inequality between sexes and genders in global politics *and* that gender theorizing has more to offer than pointing out empirical inequalities (e.g. Cohn 2011).

When it comes to the question of order in global politics, gender analysis is at once all about addressing these issues and often loathe to address them explicitly. Some feminist scholars have seen a close relationship between order and structure, and rejected top-down, power-laden analyses of how global politics works and/or the separation of global politics into discrete levels at all (e.g. Tickner 1992; Sylvester 1994; True 1996). Others have discussed ways in which orders in global politics are gendered without explicitly discussing what gender orders themselves are or how they work. Still others have discussed particular gender orders specifically, such as militarization (e.g. Eichler 2013) and social movements (e.g. Cockburn 2004). My work generally and this chapter specifically will go over two ideal-types of relationships between gender and order in global politics, which I believe exist in the world "out there" (though almost never as discretely as they are categorized herein) as well as in other scholars' research (if sometimes implicitly or phrased differently). I contend that it is possible to identify gender orders (orders structured around gender) and gendered orders (where gender supplements another primary organizing principle). The remainder of this section will explore those two relationships between gender and order in global politics.

Gender orders

I use the phrase "gender orders" to refer to orders where a or the primary structuring principle is gender. When I use the phrase "structuring principle," I mean that, following Acker's guidance, advantage and disadvantage, reward and punishment are distributed either primarily or exclusively on that principle.[4] An order is not a gender order, then, just because gender is mentioned or discussed. Instead, it is a gender order when, and only when, gender plays a key role in shaping the rules and practices in that order.

To mention a mundane example from everyday life, public restrooms are, in many if not most places in the world, gender orders.[5] Restrooms are often labeled with the sex of the people perceived to belong in them. These labels, often attached regardless of whether restrooms are for the use of single or multiple people, take many forms. Sometimes, restrooms are labeled with words—"male" and "female" or "men" and "women" or the equivalent—in a wide variety of languages. Other times, the labels are pictures without words. The pictures are most commonly a stick figure with legs for the male-associated restrooms and a stick figure that appears to be in a skirt for the female-associated restrooms. This regular configuration of restrooms groups people by (presumed) biological sex into groups of male/men and female/women and then associates those sexes with gender-based understandings of dress and appearance. Men are depicted in these pictures as wearing pants, where women are depicted as wearing

skirts. These are not empty signifiers. Instead, they carry with them associations with proper masculinities and proper femininities.

The very sex segregation of restrooms is itself emblematic of a gender order, where women are perceived to need privacy away from the male gaze and protection from men's sexualization and are therefore not expected to be in the same restroom as men.[6] Also, sanitized and purified understandings of what women and femininity are allow the masculine/public to wall off women's bodily functions as private and therefore deniable. Women can then be depicted as pure and clean—what goes on in the women's restroom can be confined there, and perceptions of women as without bodily function can remain intact.

Even unisex or all-gender restrooms represent and betray gender orders—different gender orders, but nonetheless gender orders.[7] Restrooms where the male/female dichotomy is eschewed are often themselves explicit statements of gender politics—a politics of the rejection of sex dichotomies and the associated gender differentiations and hierarchies.[8] The very notion that unisex or all-gender restrooms need labels that welcome all sexes and/or genders shows how entrenched a sex-based (and usually sex-dichotomous) order is in the organization of restrooms. Restrooms, then, are gender orders based on the repetitive invoking of sex and gender as their organizing principle, whether organized traditionally or against the grain.

Moving from the mundane to the global political arena, there are a number of gender orders that feminist scholars have identified and explored. Feminist scholars have identified gender as a structuring principle in labor distribution (e.g. Whitworth 1994; P ettman 1996; Chin 1998), migration law and practice (e.g. Brace 2013), human security (e.g. Hudson 2005; Tripp, Ferree, and Ewig 2013), peacekeeping (e.g. Kronsell 2012), military organizations (e.g. Enloe 1983; Belkin 2012), political leadership structures (e.g. Kardam 2004), and international financial institutions (Hozic and True 2016), to name a few. Here, I will provide two brief explorations of examples of gender orders in global politics to look at how they can be seen and how they function.

The first example is one I have written about before—the idea of the civilian in just war theorizing, international law, and national and international military practice.[9] As feminist scholars have observed, the idea of the civilian in war is highly gendered in a number of respects. Sue Rae Peterson (1977) identified the "protection racket" in war and conflict—where belligerents justify the making of states and the fighting of wars with reference to the "innocent women and children" who can expect to be protected by the state fighting that war. Protection, then, becomes a *casus belli*—a legitimation of war-fighting if not an actual reason to make war. Yet, the claim that women and children are actually being provided protection is a "racket"—women and children civilians are disproportionately injured by/in war and conflict, as civilian casualties, as victims of infrastructural damage, as the first to feel the health and nutrition effects of war and conflict, and as likely targets of conflict sexual violence (CSV). Jean Bethke Elshtain (1

982, 1987) suggested that the civilian/combatant dichotomy is not only gendered but also structured around gender. She frames the male/masculine combatant as a "just warrior"—a citizen-warrior motivated by, and glorified by, service to the state in the form of the provision of chivalric protection to his feminized other—the "beautiful soul." The beautiful soul, in Elshtain's account, is a Hegelian reference to someone who is at once innocent—pure, pure of heart, and uninvolved in the ugliness of whatever politics or conflict is going on around her. At the same time, she—and make no mistake, it is a she, even when women are also soldiers—is a raison d'être for politics, for state-building, for conflict, and even for war. This is because she is set up as the image of that which must be defended—the just warrior's path to honor and the nation/state's normative justification.

To talk about this gendered normative order surrounding civilians, Cynthia Enloe (1990a) used the term "womenandchildren" to show that women and children were often grouped in discussions of war and conflict, determined to *necessarily* be civilians, and framed in a way where their protection not only justifies but also mandates violence. R. Charli Carpenter (2005) showed that these stereotypes were not only in nationalist discourses and just war theorizations but also in nongovernmental organizations, media presentations, and popular imaginaries. Laura Sjoberg (2006a, 2006b) showed the ways that perceptions about traits associated with masculinities and femininities both among people and among states are key to this masculinized citizen-warrior/feminized civilian dichotomy. Other work has shown the importance of gendered dynamics constituting the category of civilians in international law (e.g. Kinsella 2006, 2011); the gendered nature of violence aimed at presumed-female civilians (Sjoberg and Peet 2011, 2019; Lee-Koo 2011); and the influence of these gendered proscribed roles on sexuality dynamics (Belkin 2012; Higate 2012; Picq and Thiel 2015).

The idea of the civilian in global politics is a gender order (and/or multiple gender orders). It can be identified as such because the two ideas (of civilians and of genders) cannot be usefully separated, even when their interactions are not linear or one-to-one. Advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity—in political and military spheres—are distributed on the basis of gender. Those understood to be male or masculine (the "just warriors") are distributed political honor on the basis of fulfilling their chivalric duty and political shame on the basis of failing at it.[10] They are also distributed the risks involved with fighting wars.[11] Those understood to be female or feminine (the "beautiful souls") are distributed political disadvantage in the form of their voices not being taken seriously (especially in security matters) and the mixed advantage/disadvantage of presumed purity. They are exempted from the risks of fighting wars and conflicts, but then distributed the disadvantage of having little agency in how wars and conflicts affect them as civilians. The "just warrior"/"beautiful soul" dichotomy can also be a locus of political control. This can be found in discussions of how to save "innocent women and children" as a justification for violent policies (e.g. US President George W. Bush's 2002 speech justifying the

invasion of Iraq). Emotion is invoked in verbal and visual depictions of the civilian in need of protection and the brave warrior who protects her, where nationalism and bravery are then implicated in the gendered matrix. Gender, then, is a primary distributor of who is understood to be (properly) where, what recognition they get, what treatment they get, and what intervention their (perceived) needs merit.

It is not just security arenas in which gender orders in global politics can be found. Another gender order in global politics is structures of movement of, legislation around, treatment of, and situations of migrant labor across a wide variety of places and contexts. In *In Service and Servitude*, Christine Chin (1998) showed that the Malaysian modernity project relied on and often justified gendered structures of bringing in domestic workers and then gendered patterns of abuse of those workers. Rhacel Parrenas (2001) has showed that there are gendered patterns in labor migration, which produce a wide variety of effects from migrant-specific gendered family dynamics and responsibilities for reproduction, gender-structured intergenerational relationships, migration-related transformations in masculinities, and gendered dynamics of aging among labor migrants. Juanita Elias (2010a: 840) discussed the ways that "the production of a gendered and racialized underclass of noncitizen domestic workers has come to play an increasingly important role in meeting the socially reproductive needs of middle class Malaysian households" and pointed out the gendered structure of social reproduction generally and migrant workers' roles in it specifically. Anna Agathangelou (2004) showed that there is an intersection between gendered labor migration structures and the global political economy of sex, and Maria Tanyag (2017) demonstrated that this intersection has far-reaching effects on reproductive freedom. Juanita Elias and Adrienne Roberts (2016: 787) showed the ways that gendered labor migration dynamics are a part of a matrix of gendered political economies of the everyday, where "social relations of gender" are mutually constitutive with "global markets and households, families, relations of social reproduction and gendered socio-cultural practices."[12] Juanita Elias (2010b) linked to gendered patterns of domestic work migration and gendered patterns of factory work migration, discussing gender in regimes of labor control, in everyday resistance and in nongovernmental labor activism.

Like in the constitution and operation of the idea of a civilian in global politics, it is not only possible but also important to see labor migration as a gender order. Not only advantage and disadvantage but also meaning and identity can be seen as linked to gender-differentiated and gender-hierarchical organizations around labor migration. Christine Chin (1998), for example, shows that modern and middle-class status in the Malaysian social and political economies relied significantly on (especially women) having gendered and raced relationships with (female and feminized) domestic workers, where advantage was distributed not only on gender but also on gendered relationships *among Malaysians*, and disadvantage was distributed on gender lines for those migrant workers used and abused in a system of presenting status. Gender was the primary axis on which female workers were both recruited and mistreated, and

gendered relationships were a primary factor in status signaling decisions and actions. Agathangelou (2004) showed the ways that states structure the gendered and sexed exploitation of wage labor migration and sex labor migration, showing both "the tenuous position of women engaged in reproductive labor, those involved in the sex trade, and those in domestic positions" and how the global and the local are interconnected on these issues in ways that reinforce gendered power structures. In each of these situations, both material and symbolic advantage and disadvantage in migrant labor situations, along with meaning and identity, can be understood as distributed directly on the basis of (perceived) gender and gendered relationships.

Associations with masculinities and/or femininities position people differently across the global political arena. Feminists have also shown that these associations matter in positioning transnational advocacy groups, candidates for elected or appointed office, states, and international organizations. In fact, gender analysis has demonstrated that a wide variety of the ways that states and nonstate actors interact (including trade, conflict, and cooperation) include gendered perceptions and gendered posturing. What this means in plain terms is that characteristics traditionally viewed as masculine, such as dominance, strength, bravery, and autonomy, continue to be associated with masculinity when they are imputed to states, companies, and organizations in the international arena. The same holds true for traits associated with femininity, including dependence, submission, the need for protection, and purity or chastity. When actors do things associated with masculinities, they are celebrated and rewarded; when actors do things that are associated with femininities, they are often penalized or devalorized.

Gender orders, whether in everyday life or in global politics (or across those), constitute meaning, distribute advantage and disadvantage, and mobilize exploitation and control on the basis of presumption of or association with particular sexes, genders, or gender-based characteristics. These orders exist in, and are structuring principles of, the global political landscape. This does not mean that, in all gender orders, we can expect to find men advantaged and women disadvantaged, or even all things associated with all masculinities advantaged to the same level, or all things associated with all femininities disadvantaged to the same level. Instead, there are multiple masculinities and femininities positioned differently in any given gender order, and multiple gender orders that position those multiple masculinities and femininities differently. Additionally, women can weaponize gender against other women, or can participate in *masculinism*—the privileging of things associated with masculinities over things associated with femininities.[13] Along similar lines, people perceived as men can be *feminized*—demoted in gender orders by their association with traits perceived as female or feminine (Peterson 2010).

These gender orders, simple or complex, large-scale or localized, visible or under the surface, exist across global politics. Yet, many IR theory approaches to thinking about how global politics works remain blind to them. While realists do not see gender *or* order in global politics, they remain convinced that structure in global politics must

be visible to exist and power must be material to matter (e.g. Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001). Feminist scholars of gender order in global politics have made the case that gender structures in global politics exist despite their frequent invisibility (e.g. Sjoberg 2012), and that gendered power matters in material ways even when it is not strictly material in the traditional sense (e.g. Shepherd 2008; Parpart and Parashar 2019). Likewise, often liberals can only see gender as a part of order when gendered impacts align with sex-based rules and laws and cease to be able to either process or protest gender-based distributions of advantage and disadvantage when law treats men and women as equal on face (see e.g. Caprioli and Boyer 2001; Hafner-Burton and Pollack 2002). Social constructivism has shown the ways in which gender-based norms can become rules and produce a gendered state of rule in the global political arena (e.g. Locher and Prugl 2001; Prugl 1999). At the same time, often, constructivist work has not provided concrete insights into the interplay of the social and the political in the constitution of those gendered states of rule.[14] This is where work at the intersection of feminist IR and International Political Sociology (IPS) has provided significant resources for exploring gender orders in global politics, with both significant interdisciplinary interaction between organizational sociology and IR research, and with cross-disciplinary material that provides fluid understandings of both gender and order (Mackay, Monro, and Waylen 2009).

Gendered orders

If gender orders are orders that distribute advantage and disadvantage, meaning and identity, exploitation and control, and action and emotion along an axis where gender is a primary distributional principle, gendered orders are orders where something else is a or even the primary distributional principle, and yet gender still plays a key role in the ways that the order is implemented and expressed. The distinction between gender orders and gendered orders is not absolute or easily recognizable in practice—that is, one can think of the degree to which gender permeates orders as a spectrum rather than a dichotomy when actually observing global politics. Conceptually, for the purpose of thinking about relationships between gender and order, I find it important to talk about the difference between orders *constituted by* gender in some primary way and orders some may say are not "about" gender but still contain gender as an important element.

One way to think about this is to think about gender-based slights or slurs that are made on the basis of some judgment or criteria that is not directly about gender. When, at a sports practice, a teammate tells another teammate who is perceived as male that he "runs like a girl," the insult is *about running*, not *about gender*, but the insult is *clearly gendered* in its formation, where there is an association between femininity and shame. If gender orders are ordered either fully or mainly by associations with gender, *gendered* orders are orders built around another principle of differentiation (e.g. race, religion, class, nationality, etc.) but wield gender to express and reinforce those orders.

As I mentioned above, *masculinism* and *feminization* are key tools of gendering, and of power in global politics.

This notion of gendered orders uses as its theoretical basis V. Spike Peterson's (2010) account of the relationship between feminizations and devalorizations. Peterson (2010: 17) makes the argument that "not only subjects like women and marginalized men can be feminized." Instead, other things can be organized hierarchically *by reference to gender*, including "concepts, desires, tastes, styles, and ways of knowing" (Peterson 2010: 17). The use of gender discourses to talk about those things operates to decrease "the legitimacy, status, and value [of that which is feminized]" (Peterson 2010: 18). This effect is both *material*—it distributes advantage and disadvantage—and *ideological*—it distributes meaning and identity. Feminization comes hand-in-hand with marginalization and subordination. Catherine MacKinnon (1983) once noted that feminization is something that can happen to anyone or anything in political and social life; it is just that we have come to accept it happening to women. In other words, *gender* orders have become more visible in global politics, while the gender content of *gendered* orders often remains unrecognized.

In gendered orders, those people, states, organizations, concepts, and ideas that are feminized are constituted *by their imputed relationship with femininity* as weak and less than. This *does not mean* that gendered orders are just or primarily about gender or that they can be reduced to gender. It is, instead, saying that—and only that—there is a gendered component in many orders, where gender is deployed "in the creation and enforcement of relationships of dominance and subordination, including gendered power, masculinization, and feminization" (Sjoberg 2017b).

The gendered content of gendered orders is an instrument of power. Feminization can be deployed to push people and/or other actors down in hierarchically structured orders. Prizing things associated with masculinity and devaluing things associated with femininity means that associations with masculinities and femininities come to be signifiers of those things that are to be valued and those things that are not to be valued. This, in turn, means that gendered associations highlight positions of either dominance or subordination in orders that do not appear to have anything to do with gender. Gendered language *expresses* and *reinforces* a wide variety of hierarchical orders, enacting subordination to those on the lower side of many hierarchies. In the remainder of this section, I will go over two examples of gendered orders in global politics to explore how gendering can be used to signify and arrange positions across orders primarily structured around other principles.

One set of orders in global politics that are gendered is related to the gender order of the civilian discussed above—it is war-legitimizing discourses and practices. As I mentioned above, the feminized other of the "just warrior," the "beautiful soul," can serve a legitimizing function in war discourses, where states or nonstate actors claim to be engaging in military conflict in order to provide protection to the women and children under their protection.[15] If wars and war-legitimizing stories are orders, it may

not be fair to think about them as gender orders—that is, primarily structured on associations with masculinities and femininities. Instead, a wide variety of other factors influence how wars are made and how they are justified, and war theorists (e.g. Levy and Thompson 2011) have dozens of theories about the primary cause or set of causes of war and conflict. At the same time, feminist scholars have shown that gender is featured prominently in war stories and war practices, and not just in the role that the image of the "beautiful soul" plays in legitimating engaging in conflict. Nancy Huston (1982) talks about war narratives as telling stories about how "the good guys" fight "the bad guys" for valorous reasons and save "their" women from "the bad guys" when they win their rightful victory. Joshua Goldstein (2001) discusses the ways that women are used to motivate fighting when soldiers are reluctant to go to war, both by gendered framings of women's helplessness and gendered shamings about masculinity and bravery.

Carol Cohn (1987) discussed the gendered and sexualized language by which opponents in war and conflict talk trash about their opponents and brag about their weapons. Sjoberg (2013) makes the argument that states position themselves around hierarchies of security and economic competition in times of war and conflict by using gendered terminology to describe dominance and defeat. Maya Eichler (2011) argues that popular and media significations about militaries change along a gendered spectrum with the popularity and success of military campaigns. Cannen (2013) details the ways in which leaders' masculinities are framed and reframed around security competitions with other states.[16] Feminist scholars have shown that CSV is motivated, executed, framed, and prosecuted in gendered ways, while states use gendered framings to minimize their accountability while maximizing the accountability assigned to their opponents.[17] Laura Shepherd (2008) has shown that gender terms are often used to securitize, and securitizing words are often gendered. These are a wide variety of ways in which political orders around war and conflict are *gendered* even when the orders are not primarily organized on the basis of gender. These examples are not meant to be exhaustive—there are many ways in which gender discourses are used by belligerents in war and conflict that are not enumerated here because of space issues. They also are not meant to be additive—any one of them shows gender playing a role in the articulation and reification of the orders in which it is implicated.

A second set of orders that can be understood as gendered are hierarchical orders between colonial and post-colonial states, where the (former) colonized state is feminized in relation to the (former) colonizer in a power relationship that is not primarily about gender but is nonetheless expressed in gendered terms (Hawkesworth 2003, 2006). A number of scholars have written about the affinities and engagements between post-colonial and feminist perspectives on global politics,[18] and several have talked about the ways that gender is interspersed in colonial and colonialized relations between states.

Chowdhry and Ling (2010) have suggested that the imperialist state has also *deployed* gendered logics in service of imperial ambitions.[19] In these situations, imperial leaders or powers declare a target state or group problematic *because of how women fare there*, and in that declaration establish both discursive superiority and warrant to intervene.[20] Relatedly, Caron Gentry and Kathryn Whitworth (2011) show the intersection of neo-Orientalist discourses and gender discourses in the constitution of orders surrounding the concept of the "terrorist" in imperial politics.[21] It is not just that gender discourses are wielded in the service of imperial hierarchies but that gender features prominently in a wide variety of legitimations of dominance and subordination in imperial political orders. Agathangelou and Ling (1997: 13) explain that "gender in postcolonality" refers "to socialization processes (masculinization, feminization) that legitimate hegemony" both among states and within them, using master narratives about sovereignty from the stakeholders in the conflict over Cyprus as an example.

Meger (2016: 378) explains that "armed conflict and political violence in postcolonial states form an integral element of the global economy of accumulation in deeply gendered ways" which, in turn, serves to "maintain neo-colonial relations of exploitation between the West and non-West" through gendering political identity and political interaction. In other words, gendered discourses and gendered dynamics signify positions in international orders of coloniality and imperialism, and are reified by them as well.

Gender is a feature not only in the ordering discourses and disciplining significations of imperial orders but also in the material manifestation and maintenance of those orders. One very straightforward way that this is the case is that women do not experience colonial and post-colonial conditions in the same ways that men do—that there are gender orders *within* orders of the post-colonial state and colonizer/colonized relationships that prop up those imperial orders (McClintock 1994).[22] Agathangelou and Ling (1997: 13) remind us that this is what Spivak's (1988) "Can the Subaltern Speak?" was concerned with at its core. They explain that "Gayatri Spivak, for instance, shows how an imperialist (masculinist) production of knowledge with its anti-imperialist (equally masculinist) reaction effectively silences a majority voice—that of subaltern women" (Agathangelou and Ling 1997: 13, citing Spivak 1988). Colonial and imperial orders have gendered impacts, and gendered dynamics are manipulated by colonial and imperial orders.

The orders of war and conflict, imperialism and coloniality are not primarily organized around gender, but they are nonetheless gendered. Within them, gender can be an expression or manifestation of relative position within the order. It can be a tool for valorizing or devalorizing across other variables, be they colonized/colonized, imperial/subordinated, or self/other. It can also be an additional axis on which advantage and disadvantage, meaning and identity are distributed within another (security, economic, cultural, or religious) order. Many approaches to seeing gender

within global politics recognize gender "in" different dynamics between states and across state borders. Sometimes, however, the language to talk about exactly what role that presence of gender plays is limited in the existing literature. Critics of feminist work have asked if it is all about gender or if other axes of empowerment and disempowerment might matter too, or even more.

To me, this is where the idea of gendered orders is conceptually useful—it provides insight into both the ways that orders can be gendered and why that gendering matters. It suggests that the primacy of gender in any given order, organization, or hierarchy is a context question for the particular order or particular situation being examined. Where gender is a or the main organizing principle, a gender order exists. Where gender is present, and even prevalent, but organizing on the basis of a different principle or principles, a gendered order exists. Along these lines, the concept of gendered order also has practical utility because it helps to make sense of the appearance of gender in hierarchical discourses that otherwise seem to be about something else. It helps understand that *gendering* sometimes does work for other rules, power plays, or organizations, which is important to see when contextualizing where gender is and what work it does across global political orders.

Feminist theorizing about order in global politics

The examples of gender orders and gendered orders in everyday life/global politics above might beg the question—are all orders gendered? Put another way, most orders (including, but not limited to, those explicitly about organizing men and women) have gender in them—do they all? And if so, what is the use in identifying and theorizing the gendering?

To the empirical questions there, it is both accurate and conceptually important to answer that it is impossible to know whether all orders are gendered, and the universality of that question misses the importance of contextual analysis of each order. Whether something is a gender order, or a gendered order, or an order that has no gender in it whatsoever is the first question—a point of departure—rather than a conclusion. The fact of the existence of a gender or gendered order is not, in itself, intellectually interesting (at least to me). Instead, the questions that follow after this observation about the contours of gender and gendered orders interest me much more. Across all of the gender orders and gendered orders that we have discussed so far in this chapter, ideas about gender, organizations among genders, meaning and identity, advantage and disadvantage have been different ideas organized in different ways. What ties them together is the use of gender either as a primary organizing principle or a secondary organizing principle or expression of organization.

I have yet to study an order in global politics that I do not see being either a gender order or a gendered order. That does not mean that an order without gender in it does

not exist—it only means that I am not sure. But it is important to note the prevalence of gender in global political orders—most, if not all, global political orders can be found to contain gendered discourses, gendered meanings, and gendered organizations. For these reasons, continuing to build a research program on the sociology and politics of gender and gendered orders in global politics is, in my view, not only worthwhile but also essential. I see four potential research directions that can have the effect of synthesizing existing contributions and pushing conversations forward. First, research examining the contexts *within* gender orders and gendered orders in global politics explicitly would be fruitful. Second, and relatedly, research on *how* gender works as an ordering principle or principle that communicates order would be useful. Third, it would be interesting to explicitly theorize the dynamics between gender as a signifying or sub-ordering principle in gendered orders and the primary structuring principles in those orders. Fourth, it would be interesting to relate theorizing gender and gendered order to disorder, crisis, and chaos in global politics to see about the applicability of the principles in those situations. In lieu of concluding this chapter, I will briefly discuss each in turn.

First, looking at the contexts within or contours of particular gender orders is a fruitful research direction. Across this chapter, I have cited significant work relevant to understanding how gender operates in ordering global politics, from labor migration to war. A small minority of this scholarship, though, has specifically addressed gender *as ordering* and orders *as gendered*. That work, which has largely directly engaged with political and organizational sociology, is, in my view, an impressive and important step that should be taken across feminist IR analyses. Using sociological work as conceptual and methodological guidance to move the study of genderings in/of orders forward is important. This approach could be leveraged to answer key questions about particular gender and gendered orders, such as what genderings are at work in a particular order. What ideas and positions are being expressed through particular gender-based associations? How are genders distributing (what) advantages and disadvantages? What does one gender order look like compared to another in a similar context, or others in different contexts?

Second, and building on this, further research on *how* gender works as an ordering principle or principle that communicates order would be an important topic for feminist political sociology work. Feminists have done some work on "how the process of *ordering* operates across special relationships, temporal dynamics of everyday life, and scales of politics," but there is more exploration to be done.[23] Work on *how* gender orders can start with the understanding that orders in global politics often work on gendered logics. Gender orders and gendered orders are "performed, forcible, and reiterative process(es) of recognitions, where gender is signifier of position and signified in the process of positioning" (Sjoberg 2017b). The reiterative nature of gender/ed orders in global politics can have an effect on both the reach and durability of gender and genderings as they operate in global politics—even as both gender and

global politics are constantly changing. Performativity and iteration are two mechanisms that post-structural feminists have identified as key to the workings of social and political life. Other feminist scholars have discussed the operation of gendered power, gendered negotiation, and gendered social construction in the operation of global politics. It would be productive to develop thinking about how these processes which feminist scholars in IR have identified as at work in global politics impact order and ordering, both in order to better understand relevant mechanisms and how they work *and* in order to begin to find ways to make explicit the "invisible" genders in social and political orders.

Third, it would be useful to do more explicit theorizing about gendered orders, particularly how the relationship between primary structuring principles in those orders and gender as a signifying or sub-ordering principle works. I am not suggesting that theorists work towards a grand theory of how gender relates to other principles in gendered orders—that, to me, defies the very level of locality and specificity to which feminist lenses draw attention in global politics. Instead, I mean that it would be interesting to explore specific relationships in gendered orders between other ordering principles (e.g. class, religion, race) and gender to see the ways that gender signifiers are changed or adapted when they express different ordering principles or hierarchies. For example, is the dichotomy between gender orders and gendered orders too simple a heuristic? Which concept (if either) covers situations that would be accounted for in feminist theorizing with discussions of intersectionality?[24] Certainly, intersectionality is not captured in a "gender order" since the major thing intersectional scholarship teaches us is that the intersecting categories are multiplicative rather than additive. But then it also is not captured in a "gendered order" since gender is more than a complementary factor. It might be worth thinking about how to describe these complexities and how to rely on existing intersectional and decolonial scholarship to do so.

Finally, thinking about how to relate theorizing about gender orders and gendered orders to disorder, chaos, and crisis would be an interesting future research direction. While it at first appears that disorder, chaos, and crisis are the opposite of order, this approach can be easily complicated. It would be interesting to study gender and gendered *disorders*, or *crises* of gender and gendering, which would certainly be one facet of such an analysis. But it would also be interesting to think about the ways that gender *orders* disorder and crisis. What assumptions about gender remain in place during crises? What assumptions change? Do changing assumptions about gender signal the coming (or going) of crisis or disorder? How can gender orders help us to understand (gender) disorder and disorder more generally? Might there be a concept "gender order," on top of gender orders and gendered orders, to describe a state of being, perhaps analogous to Nicholas Onuf's (1989) understanding of a state of rule?

I think that following these four directions would enrich an already strong set of interchanges between feminist IR work and political sociology, exploring the many and multifaceted relationships between gender and order in global politics.

Notes

1. For an explicit discussion of crossing disciplinary boundaries, see Mackay, Monro, and Waylen (2009).
2. For various previous instantiations of my thinking on this, see Sjoberg (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017a, 2017b). Most of this work was done with an interest in the implications for political realism. This chapter looks to explore the ideas and their implications more broadly.
3. See work cited in n 2.
4. For further discussion in feminist organizational sociology, see e.g. Britton and Logan (2008); Hult (1995); Ashcr aft and Mumby (2004).
5. This will largely be an informal discussion for illustrative purposes, but the topic has been explored by a significant volume of scholarship if the reader is interested in engaging these questions more directly. See e.g. Hu esmann (2016); Davis (2020); Cavanagh (2010); Schilt and Westbrook (2009). This is just a small sampling of a significant scholarly literature.
6. See explicit discussion about sex and sexuality in Cavanagh (2010).
7. While I do not explicitly discuss complexities of remaining gender hierarchies here, see discussions in Sanders (2 017); Davis (2020).
8. For such statements, see e.g. Beemyn (2005); Chaney and Sanchez (2018).
9. See e.g. Sjoberg (2006a, 2006b); Sjoberg and Peet (2011, 2019).
10. See further discussions in Stiehm (1982); Huston (1982); Cohn (2013).
11. See further discussions in Goldstein (2001).
12. Citing Bakker and Gill (2003); Bakker and Silvey (2008); Bezanson and Luxton (2006); Elias and Gunawardana (2013); Elson (1998); Marchand and Runyan (2010).
13. For examples of work on women discriminating against women on the basis of sex/gender, see e.g. Sjoberg (201 6), discussing women as perpetrators of conflict sexual violence against other women.
14. See discussion of this point broadly in Sjoberg and Barkin (2018).
15. Elshtain (1987); Stiehm (1982); Huston (1982); Sjoberg and Peet (2011, 2019).
16. A phenomenon Sjoberg (2013) suggests also happens to female leaders.
17. See e.g. Stiglmayer (1994). For more on motivation, see e.g. Skjelsbaek (2012); Cohen (2013); Stern and Baaz (2013). For more on practices of sexual violence, see e.g. Schott (2011); Card (1996); Shepherd (2006). For framings, see e.g. Kirby (2015); Kirby and Henry (2012). For jurisprudence, see e.g. Sjoberg (2016); Henry (201 1). For state policy and responsibility questions, see e.g. Wood (2014); Grey and Shepherd (2013).
18. See e.g. Parashar (2016); Chowdhry and Ling (2010); Spivak (1988); Mohanty (1994); Chowdhry and Nair (200 4).
19. See also Marchand (2009); Wibben (2010); McClintock (1995).
20. A simple case of this can be seen in the speech cited above by US President George W. Bush on Iraq. See also Cooke (2002); Spivak (1988); Hussein (2019).
21. See also Gentry (2015).
22. See extensive discussion in Chowdhry and Ling (2010).
23. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this phrasing of the idea.
24. See e.g. MacKinnon (2013); McCall (2005); Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall (2013); Crenshaw (1990).

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CHAPTER 25

SPATIAL ORDER

Territoriality, Internationalism, and Resistance

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between space and politics in traditional International Relations (IR) manifests in three main ways. First, mainstream realists draw inspiration from nineteenth-century geographers such as Halford Mackinder and Alfred Thayer Mahan to evaluate the "hard facts" of geography as a causal variable of state power.[1] All international actors can do is play the hand they are dealt by geography. Second, control over a fixed territory is considered an essential part of Westphalian state sovereignty. State borders divide the earth's surface into governable units and separate the realm of domestic hierarchy from international anarchy. Finally, certain strands of liberalism embrace economic and cultural globalization as a welcome challenge to state sovereignty. However, these conceptions largely take space and the global spatial order for granted as existing features of the international system to be preserved or challenged.

This chapter shows how International Political Sociology (IPS) research can help IR develop a critical understanding of the current spatial order by highlighting the international political and social forces that underpin the construction of space. First, space is political in that dominant spatial configurations are held in place by power, and these configurations have consequences for legitimacy, authority, and the distribution of resources. Second, space is social in that dominant imaginaries of space and how spaces should be ordered and governed are woven into the social fabric of international life. There are spatial assumptions embedded in the main social processes that constitute the modern world, including imperialism, state formation, and globalization. And political power naturalizes these spatial assumptions by making them seem obvious, timeless, and true. By emphasizing the contingent social processes that gave rise to the global spatial order, IPS challenges the fixity of spatial assumptions and shows how these assumptions are historically, socially, and political situated.

In doing so, I follow what Reus-Smit and Towns outline in the opening chapter to this part as the two main features of IPS research into international order—that the international is historically contingent and socially situated, and IPS research draws

from other disciplines to help us understand how the international works. However, to challenge the fixity of spatial assumptions, I necessarily adopt what Reus-Smit and Towns label as the "narrow" conception of IPS as a critical project to challenge both the ontological and epistemic rigidity of the territorially bounded spatial order. This critical move is necessary to frame space and global spatial configurations as socially and historically contingent. However, to argue that space is socially and historically contingent is *not* to argue that spatial assumptions are reducible solely to discourses and practices, as if the material world has no bearing on the way we conceptualize, seek to control, and dream about space. Instead, I maintain it is the co-constitution of ideas and materiality that sits are the core of the modern spatial order.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I describe the modern spatial order as comprised of linear and territorially bounded units of political authority and stress how attention to IPS shows that this global spatial configuration did not arise overnight with the Peace of Westphalia but rather through slower, more nuanced social processes. IR's adherence to an idealized Westphalian territoriality, however, ensnares our analysis of spatial authority in the "territorial trap" that hinders both our conception of global social reality and our ability to imagine beyond. The next section highlights how attention to IPS helps us conceptualize the "international" not as a spatial configuration that emerged in opposition to state territoriality but alongside and co-constituted with territoriality in the nineteenth century. Hence, spatial logics were enfolded into civilizational hierarchies, imperial conquest, and the transformation of the world into core–periphery relations. The global is another spatial configuration often framed as a rejection of state territoriality—however, critical scholarship from geography shows how the global as a totalizing vision of a united humanity was fabricated through the lens of US hegemony in the mid-twentieth century. Hence, rather than a direct challenge to the modern spatial order, the international and global are entangled in territorially bounded social and political processes. The final section examines resistance to the modern spatial order through three concepts—nonhuman rights, counter-mapping, and marronage. All three draw on disciplines outside of IR to reframe nature–society relations and challenge the territorial assumptions at the core of the modern spatial order.

The modern spatial order: Territoriality and the state

A cornerstone that underpins the modern spatial order is the assumption that territorially bounded states constitute the main legitimate units of international politics. For IR, the world is comprised of sovereign states. A key feature of the sovereign state is the notion of territoriality, which John Ruggie defines as political rule that "differentiates its subject collectively into territorially defined, fixed, and mutually exclusive enclaves of legitimate dominion" (1993: 151). This vision of legitimate political authority is

distinct from the medieval world where, as Jordan Branch describes, "Both territorial and nonterritorial authorities in overlapping, decentralized arrangements" operated together to form hybrid authorities (2011: 9). Unlike the modern state, these political authorities were not necessarily linear or contiguous—they were often collections of spaces that overlapped with unclear boundaries. Nonterritorial authorities manifested in "personal bonds of feudal ties, oaths of allegiance … and authorities over economic and religious issues" (Branch 2011: 9). In contrast to this medieval order, the modern spatial order is one of discrete, linear, non-overlapping, and bounded political units which bifurcate politics into inward (domestic) and outward (international) spatial configurations.

The rise of territoriality

While the founding myth of IR tells a story of transformation from the medieval order to the modern one with the Peace of Westphalia, attention to the global sociological forces that forged the modern state highlights a slower, more nuanced, and more contested process. Many scholars, particularly international lawyers, have highlighted the importance of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia as a critical juncture for IR (see Osiander 2001: 264–266 for a fuller discussion), but perhaps the most prominent was Leo Gross, who declared that 1648 was "the majestic portal which leads from the old into the new world" (1948: 28). For these scholars, Westphalia was the moment of transformation where the principle of non-interference and sovereign equality took root. More recently, however, scholars have questioned both whether the Treaties of Osnabrück and Münster actually say and do what is popularly attributed to them (Osiander 2001; Stirk 2012)[2] and whether a new global order realistically arose overnight in the seventeenth century (Krasner 1995; Branch 2011; Glanville 2013). They do not deny that an international order of territorially -bounded states came to replace the medieval order, but their account of that transition charted slower and multifaceted social transformations that continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Scott 1998; Osiander 2001: Buzan and Lawson 2015; Goettlich 2018). These scholars tend to emphasize social processes and interactions—what Jackson and Nexon (1999) call "relationalism"—over "substantialist" assumptions that "entities are already entities before they enter into social relations with other entities" (1999: 293).

One of the key legitimating forces behind the transformation of political legitimacy from interpersonal ties to territorially bounded rule was the control over nature.[3] Based on Enlightenment confidence in the ability of scientific management to improve nature for the benefit of society, this claim depended on a combination of material and discursive forces to argue that a rational, impersonal state authority is best placed to improve and govern an established territory (Yao 2022). Sociologist Chandra Mukerji highlights "logistical power" or "power derived from controlling and shaping the natural world" as central in undermining traditional elite networks of power and

consolidating the French state in the seventeenth century (Mukerji 2010: 402). Logistical power draws symbolically on Judeo-Christian notions of legitimate political rule as stewardship over God's domain and restoration of the garden of Eden (Drayton 2000) but also relies on the legitimating function of both formal and practical scientific knowledge to bend the environment to the will of the state. This form of power is able to reconfigure the world in a way that makes state power over a bounded territory seem "inevitable, nature, or true" (Mukerji 2010: 404). Similarly, James C. Scott's work demonstrate how the modern bureaucratic state's cardinal aim is to impose order on illogical nature and society. In *Seeing Like a State*, Scott (1998) argues that powerful state bureaucracies work to impose "legibility" by reducing messy social and natural realities within their territories into simplified and standardized units of analysis and management. Doing so allows the state to more easily govern and profit from its domain. Imposing legibility relies on what Scott calls an ideology of high modernism —"a sweeping vision of how the benefit of technical and scientific progress might be applied" for social control (1998: 89–90). Hence, the territorially bounded state relies on ideas of rational control and scientific progress to legitimate its political power and to extract maximum economic value from its lands.

A key technology that helped the modern state impose logistical power and legibility over a bounded territory was cartography. Critical geographers have long argued that cartographic representations are not innocent reflections of an objective spatial reality but make arguments about knowledge, power, and authority (Ó'Tuathail 1996; Dalby and Ó'Tuathail 1998; Dodds, Kuus, and Sharp 2013). Ó'Tuathail draws on Jacques Derrida and Ferdinand de Saussure by comparing maps to texts in their power to fix meaning and elevate a singular understanding of the world above others. By mapping a city, a river, or a border, maps take the ebb and flow of social and natural processes and freeze them into a depiction of timeless truth. The viewer is then able to take a God-like stance as a distant observer to survey and exercise control over the scene. Power is enacted through not only what is seen on maps but also what has been erased. In the seventeenth century, English mapmakers omitted Irish cabins from official records, and in the eighteenth century, they erased the poor of London and Native Americans of Virginia (Harley 1988: 292). Similarly, cartography constructed empty space which, in supposedly "untamed" spaces like the American West and along the Congo River basin, translated to *terra nullius*—lands without legitimate authority and hence ripe for imperial conquest.

Jordan Branch's work (2011, 2014) builds on insights from critical geography to show how mapping facilitated the transition from the medieval spatial order to the modern one by helping early modern Europeans envision linear territoriality. He shows how homogenous territories and linear boundaries appeared on maps before they became political practice. In addition, the consolidation of linear and exclusive territoriality was not just a process internal to Europe, and "certain practice and ideas fundamental to modern states and international relations appeared first in the colonial

world" (Branch 2014: 279). For example, mapping technologies developed by colonial empires in the Americas were brought back to Europe to inform state practices. Hence, European colonialism and imperialism played an important role in the development of the territorially bound order—an important point, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Territoriality and its discontents

If territoriality is a social practice that evolves with historical context rather than a static feature of the international system that emerged in 1648, then traditional IR theory's treatment of territoriality as a fixed geographical assumption falls into what John Agnew (1994) calls a "territorial trap." Agnew argues that the trap is set from three directions, which encumbers our understanding of international politics. First, IR assumes the world is divided into fixed territorial units, which obscures the historical and social processes that led to state formation; second, the domestic–international separation conceals the manifold interactions from trade to migration that have always transcended this binary; and third, the state exists as containers for societies, which means we think about societies mainly in distinct national units, that is French or American society (1994: 59). The consequence of IR's adherence to an idealized version of the territorial state is not only that we fail to understand the complexity of social reality but also that "we cannot see a world in which its [the territorial state's] role and meaning change" (Agnew 1994: 77). In the following, I briefly illustrate two political spaces that will become increasingly important in the twenty-first century—the global oceans and outer space—and show how the territorial trap ensnares our thinking and prevents us from imagining beyond the current spatial order.

The global oceans have long been an animating concern for international theorists of territoriality. In his 1609 *Mare Liberum*, Hugo Grotius—often dubbed the "founding father" of international law—argued that spaces can only be owned through occupation and use. Since the seas and air cannot be exclusively owned and occupied by one state, then their "common use is destined for all men" (1609: 27–28). However, if a piece of shoreline is effectively occupied, then it can become property "only so far as such occupation does not affect its common use" (1609: 30). Here, Grotius divides the oceans into two zones—one subject to the logics of territoriality (but with a common use caveat) and another that frames the oceans as global commons. The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Seas (UNCLOS) codifies some of Grotius's argument, but largely eliminates the common use caveat and adds a third zone.[4] It makes a distinction between the high seas, 12 nautical miles of territorial waters, and 200 nautical miles of exclusive economic zone (EEZ) (Thornton 2004). This draws an artificial line in the oceans between enclosed areas subject to territorial control and the areas beyond. However, water is fluid and does not always respect these lines. Neither do fish stocks that follow ocean currents, liquid and gas resources beneath the seabed,

and potential wind and tidal power. Further, the territorialization of offshore spaces does not always make sense for communities that, through everyday practices, have developed complex relationships with shorelines and tidal zones. Hence, the application of territorial logics to parts of the ocean continues to fall into Agnew's territorial trap.

This spatial division between territorial zones and high seas underpins two seemingly intractable sets of international policy dilemmas when it comes to the ocean. First, the potential resource wealth in and beneath the ocean means that states are willing to use and abuse international law in their competition for territorial waters and EEZs. For example, the building of artificial islands in the South and East China Seas and Russia's aggressive behavior in the Arctic demonstrates the lengths to which states are willing to go to secure control over these territories (Chen 2015; Singh and Yamamoto 2017; Alessio and Renfro 2022). Second, increasing transboundary environmental challenges from declining fish stocks to marine plastics require state action, and yet the fluid nature of the ocean means that states can evade responsibility for these environmental ills as a problem of the high seas beyond their territorial domain (Vidas 2011; Havice and Zalik 2018). In both cases, the powerful pull of territoriality in ordering global political authority and responsibility shapes the nature of the problem and limits our ability to explore solutions that require thinking beyond territorial logics.

Furthermore, *Mare Liberum* included both the seas and air as spaces that cannot be exclusively owned and occupied. However, in the twentieth century, as technology made state control of the skies possible, state territoriality became a three-dimensional concern, and two principles came to frame the issue of state authority over airspace within and beyond the earth's atmosphere. The 1944 Convention on International Civil Aviation specifics that states have absolute jurisdiction above territorial lands and waters with no limits, but the 1967 Outer Space Treaty (OTS) maintains that outer space is "the province of all mankind" and "not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use and occupation, or by any other means" (United Nations General Assembly 1966). It was unclear, however, where territorial airspace ended and outer space began. In a 2017 working paper, the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Use of Outer Space outlined differing perspectives on how to draw the line and proposed a delineation between airspace and outer space at "100 km above mean sea level," with consideration for passage. However, like the global oceans, the application of territorial logics to parts of airspace and not others do not address the fluid nature of the earth's atmosphere, where air pollution, greenhouse gases, and space debris do not stop at territorial borders. Effectively addressing these global issues will likely require a re-evaluation of ironclad territorial logics that underlie the current global spatial order.

The International, Globalization, and the Spatial Order

The international and global are often framed as challenges to the modern spatial order comprised of linearly bounded territorial states. Jeremy Bentham's first use of the term "international" in 1789 presupposes a world of sovereign states and understood the international as relations between these states (Suganami 1978). However, the term has taken on meaning for those who dream beyond the straitjacket of state-centric politics (Mazower 2012).[5] Rather than conceptualize the international and global as rejections of territorial authority, attention to international sociological processes shows that the international and global evolved in conjunction with the territorial state. By focusing on the international as part of the current spatial order, we can see the ways in which the emergence of the territorial state was part of nineteenth-century global transformations that reconfigured the world into a core–periphery order with Europe at its economic and political center (Buzan and Lawson 2015). Conversely, we can also see how the notion of an "international" order "has long been commingled with that of European consolidation and informed by European exceptionalism" (Pitts 2018: 10). At its core, the building of an international spatial order was a hierarchical project that elevated Europe and the West as the economic, political, and intellectual leaders of global politics.

However, just because the modern spatial order conferred disproportionate power onto Europe does not mean that it developed solely within the boundaries of Europe and spread across the world through the unidirectional transmission of ideas and practices from the core outwards to the periphery. Instead, the consolidation of linear and exclusive territoriality as the international standard of legitimate governance depended on co-constitution between Europe and the periphery—a process Dunne and Reus-Smit (2017) describe as the "globalization of international society." This use of the term "globalization" challenges understandings of it as the thickening of transnational connections in the late twentieth century that supposedly led to the erosion of the sovereign state. Instead, this usage illustrates two interlinked processes: first, the "spread of the institution of the sovereign state, and of a set of distinctive social relationships among these states," and second, "How the society of sovereign states transformed as it spread across the globe" (Dunne and Reus-Smit 2017: 5–6). In other words, globalization did not destroy the sovereign state—in fact, it was processes of globalization prior to the mid-twentieth century that consolidated the sovereign state's dominance as *the* legitimate unit of political authority. The term also implies that our understanding of territoriality and the current spatial order was forged by social processes that transcended Europe. The following section charts the globalization of the spatial order—first, through European imperialism and notions of civilizational hierarchies in the nineteenth century, and second, through the geographical imaginary of the "global" in the twentieth century as a manifestation of a US-led international order.

Constituting the spatial order: Empire, civilization, and the international

As exploration and colonialism brought Europeans into contact with societies elsewhere, the spatial division between civilized and noncivilized peoples was an important way in which Europeans made sense of their own place within a globalizing international society. By the nineteenth century, civilizational hierarchies had been codified in international law under the formal "Standards of Civilization." Polities deemed "civilized" were afforded full rights and legitimacy to participate in international society, while those deemed uncivilized were excluded (Bowden 2014; Towns 2009; Yao 2019). To achieve civilized status, and hence inclusion, in international society, a polity needed to demonstrate suitable domestic institutions such the rule of law and capacity for self-defense, as well as international recognition (Bowden 2014: 217). These civilizational standards effectively divided the world into spaces of rational progress and spaces of backwardness "beyond the pale" that required the helping hand of more advanced societies. Early international organizations[6] were created in the nineteenth century to govern untamed geographies that lacked civilized territorial control—for example, the 1856 European Commission of the Danube was created to manage the wild Danube delta on the far eastern edge of Europe (Yao 2019). Hence, "international" governance did not simply emerge out of cooperation between European states but through Europe's co-constitutive relationship with peripheral geographies and its efforts to tame and control potentially unstable corridors and spaces.

While formal civilization standards fell away in the twentieth century, an implicit spatial division between civilization and barbarism continues to structure our understanding of legitimate versus illegitimate territorial control from the failed states discourses to the spatial imaginaries behind the global war on terror (Anghie 2007; Gruffydd Jones 2013). This division has also been perpetuated by the concept of quasi-statehood that attempts to capture the "incomplete" sovereignty of newly independent states after colonialism, particularly in the African context (Jackson 1990; Grovogui 2002). In addition to dividing the world into zones of civilization and barbarism, civilizational hierarchies of the nineteenth century produced a global spatial imaginary where civilization, and hence, political legitimacy, emanates from Europe outwards. This imaginary was expressed first, in the equation of certain visual indicators with civilization, and second, in the conflation between spatial and temporal dynamics.

First, civilizational hierarchies as a component of the modern spatial order have a certain aesthetic—a particular "look" that acts as a shorthand to indicate whether a landscape is occupied by a civilized authority. This look is perhaps best described by John Stuart Mill in his essay *Civilization* (1836), where he depicts uncivilized spaces as "consisting of a handful of individuals … scattered over a vast tract of country" without permanent residence, complex trade networks, manufacturing, agriculture, or legal systems. In contrast, Mill describes civilized spaces as "rich in the fruits of agriculture, commerce, and manufacturers." Hence, civilized spatial configurations are productive landscapes where the social and natural worlds are ordered in such a way

as to maximize their economic usefulness. Early justifications for colonialism rested on these logics. The lands occupied by Indigenous populations of the Americas and elsewhere lacked this civilized aesthetic, and therefore, these populations failed to demonstrate effective occupation which delegitimatized their political authority (Jahn 1999; Quijano 2000). The longing to recreate this civilized aesthetic informed how European colonizers sought to transform the untamed spaces they encountered. For example, explorer Henry Morton Stanley speculated that if he had enough industrious men, he could transform the Congo basin into "a vast productive garden" (Stanley 1886: 94). Here, colonial ambitions were justified by the aim to transform wild nature into a tamed and productive space for the benefit for local and international society. In this way, the curation of controlled landscapes from Europe's elaborate gardens to colonial land management was intimately bound up in discourses of civilization and imperialism (Mitchell 1994).

Second, the civilizational hierarchies at the heart of the modern spatial order operates through the conflation of space and time, with Europe and the West at the forefront and center of both (Agnew 1996; Chakrabarty 2008; Rao 2020). As John Agnew contends, the conflation of time with space is "a fundamental characteristic of European geopolitical discourses" (1996: 28). Civilization as a continuum implies a temporal ordering of societies with "advanced" societies in the lead, while others are labelled "backwards"—a term that suggests they hold a place further back in time along the same civilizational continuum. This temporal continuum is then mapped onto terrestrial space, and geographies at the periphery are conceptualized as both spatially and temporally distant from the civilized core. This conflation can be seen in the spatial imaginary that informs the words of Friedrich von Schiller, when he envisioned civilized Europeans as merely "a more advanced brother of the Red Indian and the Celt" (1972 [1789]: 328), and Georg Wilhelm Hegel, when he characterized Africa as "the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of night" (2007 [1899]: 91). In her work, Anne McClintock eloquently describes this equation of time and space in the European colonial imagination: "The movement forward in space is backward in time: from erect, verbal consciousness and hybrid freedom … down through the historic stages of decrease stature to the shambling, tongueless zone of precolonial, from speech to silence, light to dark" (1995: 10). By conflating temporal and spatial logics, Europe in the nineteenth century imagined itself as the temporal and spatial leader of a global spatial order—a mantle that would pass to the Americans in the twentieth century.

The God trick: The global as spatial totality

The twentieth century saw the development of a new spatial imaginary of the global that emerged from the advancement of camera technology combined with further exploration into the earth's atmosphere. If state power relies on surveillance within a bounded

territory to exercise social control, then aerial photography can be understood as an extension of that panoptic vision into three-dimensional space (Haraway 1988; Ahmed 2012). Between the First and Second World Wars, photographers from the sky captured known cities and unknown frontiers such as Antarctica, and balloon expeditions sponsored by the US Army Air Corps along with the National Geographic Society ascended more than thirteen miles (22 kilometers) up. Photos from these expeditions not only showed the earth's curvature but also saw the world through what Donna Haraway calls the "god's eye" trick (Haraway 1988). As one of the early pioneers of balloon flight, John A. Macready, mused in the pages of the *National Geographic* magazine, "The view is a magnificent thing, and one can easily imagine himself a superior being looking upon the work of Lilliputians" (Macready 1926: 776). This view from above allows us to know, and hence control, what is below—a way of seeing that continues to inform our understanding of satellites and drone technologies (Williams 2015).

This new spatial vision of the global culminated in *Earthrise*, the famous photo taken by astronaut William Anders on Christmas Eve 1968 from the *Apollo 8* mission. The image depicts a small blue-and-white marble from the other side of the moon, and for the first time, we actually saw the earth against the scale of the vast universe. *National Geographic*'s coverage waxed poetic on the unifying effect of this new way of seeing by quoting Archibald MacLeish beneath a beautiful photo of the earth floating in black space: "To see the earth as it truly is, small and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats, is to see ourselves as riders on the earth together, brothers on that bright loveliness in the eternal cold—brothers who know now they are truly brothers" (Philips 1969: 614). In many ways, this image, along with *Blue Planet* (1972) taken by *Apollo 17*, presents the continuation of internationalist visions stretching back to the nineteenth century, echoing Victor Hugo's words in the guidebook to the 1867 Paris World's Fair: "Down with war! Let there be alliance! Concord! Unity! Oh France, adieu … thou shalt no longer be France: thou shalt be Humanity! No Longer a nation, thou shalt be Ubiquity!" (quoted in Chandler 1986). With *Earthrise* and *Blue Planet*, human ingenuity through science and technology had given a concrete spatial embodiment to the utopic vision of a unified humanity. This new spatial imaginary also coincided with optimistic globalists who saw the increasing density of global connections through economic and cultural globalization as a way to break down narrow, territorially bounded parochialism (Ward 1966; Jasanoff 2004). Into the twenty-first century, we also find echoes of this optimistic sense of human unity in ecomodernists and those who welcome the "good" Anthropocene. Rather than view the Anthropocene as a manmade disaster, ecomodernists see human domination of all planetary forces as an opportunity to create a better planet (Hamilton 2016: 233).

However, critical scholars have challenged the homogenizing and totalitarian tendencies of this "god trick." Benjamin Lazier draws on Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger to show how what he calls the "Earthrise era" parallels totalitarianism in its effort to fabricate a new world by displacing "the grown by the made, of living

organism by technical artifacts" (Lazier 2011: 602). To highlight the artificiality of this view from above, Lazier quotes astronaut Frank Borman on the *Apollo 8* mission, who saw the earth from the window and said, "Look at that picture over there!" At first sight, Borman has already framed the earth as a tourist or Instagrammer might, through a camera lens for public consumption. This produced image aspires to be universal and objective but at the same time is de-socialized and what Thomas Lekan (2014) calls "disembodied," subsuming global diversity into a single vision of humanity. Denis Cosgrove contends that the "Apollonian gaze" that "pulls diverse life on earth into a vision of unity … from a single perspective" is an imperial master view underpinned by a "universalizing teleology of Western Christianity" (Cosgrove 2001: xi). Cosgrove argues that while this gaze purports to show a common humanity, it was created in the service of US foreign policy in the Cold War era as the utopian spatial imaginary of a US-led global order.

Indeed, this is a prevailing critique of the Anthropocene that assumes a uniform and homogenous "anthros" while concealing the spatial unevenness in which environmental responsibility, benefits, and harms have been, and will continue to be, distributed. Scholars have argued that a better moniker for our current geological age is the *Capitalocene* (Moore 2017) or *Eurocene* (Grove 2019) that highlights, rather than conceals, this spatial unevenness. This critique also lies at the heart of resistance against a "Global IR" agenda that adopts the concept of the globe "as a holistic and universal entity" and assumes that scholars from the Global South simply need to be brought into the fold without critically interrogating the historical construction of that "global" (Anderl and Witt 2020: 35–36). Such a historical reckoning would reveal that territorially bounded interests and power structures have helped fabricate this totalizing global vision. Hence, to see the earth from a distance and frame its societies as a uniform whole merely obscures the dominance of the current spatial order. Ultimately, the celestial view from space, which celebrates the unity of humanity, is firmly rooted in earthly spatial orders of territoriality, power, and control.

Resisting the spatial order: Nonhuman rights, counter-mapping, and marronage

Despite the ambition of states and empires alike to exert homogenous control over linearly bounded territory, pockets of unevenness and resistance have always characterized the modern spatial order. State control over territory has been challenged through organized social movements and revolutions (Skocpol 1994; Lawson 2019) and less organized forms of everyday resistance such as foot-dragging and sabotage (Scott 1985). Likewise, colonial empires have always had an uneven spatial texture, what Lauren Benton describes as a "fabric full of holes, stitched together out of pieces, a tangle of string" (Benton 2010: 39). We might divide the sources of uneven spatial

control into two categories—resistance from people who contest state and imperial power and resistance from the physical environment, which hinders state and imperial power projection. For example, Benton charts how early colonial control depended on rivers and coastal waterways, hence leaving colonial authority muted in spaces distant from these arteries. In this section, I suggest that the two should be seen as mutually constitutive in analyzing ongoing resistance against the modern spatial order. The three modes of resistance I highlight below—nonhuman rights, counter-mapping, and marronage—are by no means exhaustive of all types of resistance. However, in all three modes discussed, it is the interplay between human societies and the natural environment that informs their challenge to territoriality and rests at the heart of their rearticulation of the relationship between space and politics.

One avenue of resistance against the international spatial order and land ownership logics governed by Western colonial legacies is in the granting of legal rights to nonhuman entities such as rivers and forests. Ecuador's Constituent Assembly adopted a new constitution in 2008 that recognizes nature's "right to integral respect for its existence and for the maintenance and regeneration of its life cycles, structures, function, and evolutionary processes" (quoted in Youatt 2017: 47). In 2010, Bolivia followed suit by granting rights and legal protection to *Pachamama*—nature embodied for Indigenous peoples of the Andes region. In addition, legal personhood has been granted to specific nonhuman entities, including the Whanganui River in New Zealand in 2017, the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers in India in 2017 (later rescinded), a part of the Amazon rainforest in Colombia in 2018, all the rivers in Bangladesh in 2019, and the Muteshekau-shipu (Magpie) River in Quebec in 2021.

Some have been skeptical of these developments as legal greenwashing or empty gestures to appease an increasingly environmentally conscious international audience by using these legal "innovations" to conceal the continued subjugation of nature under human-centric legal frameworks (Haraway 2008). After all, nonhuman entities would still rely on human spokespersons to represent their interests in a human court of law. However, others argue that these legal experiments serve both a normative and practical purpose (Andreotti et al. 2018; Barcan 2020). Not only do these laws supplement current environmental legislation that has failed to protect natural spaces and the communities that depends on them, but also they pose a normative challenge to Western legal assumptions that value nature as simply the "private property" of individuals and state actors. As Ruth Barcan contends, giving nature legal standing is a first step "to rattle some of the foundations of the House that Modernism Built such as anthropocentrism and Western conceptions of autonomy, separability and property" (Barcan 2020: 813). Maori activists in New Zealand, who campaigned for granting personhood rights to nonhuman entities such as the Whanganui River and Mount Taranak, explicitly understood their actions as an "unthinking" of a particular relationship with nature imposed by colonialism (Dentice 2018). In other words, existing legal frameworks force Indigenous communities to adopt dominant ways of

framing nature as property in order to argue their case. Allowing the river to "own itself" is an open rejection of the principles behind territoriality. As Rafi Youatt (2017) argues, these legal developments challenge the singular understanding of nature embedded in Westphalian assumptions.

Another methodological avenue for challenging the current spatial order is through counter-mapping—a method developed by critical, feminist, and post-colonial geographers. If mapping represents the exercise of social power, then it can also be repurposed as a tool to contest or resist dominant representations of spatial reality. Hence, counter-mapping uses cartographic techniques from simple sketches to Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies to make visible what was invisible, question spatial assumptions, and construct alternative narratives of spatial legitimacy from the bottom up (Peluso 1995; Kwan 2002; Tazzioli and Garelli 2019). For example, anti-eviction groups in the San Francisco Bay Area have mapped dispossession and resistance to gentrification in order to not only perform an "autopsy" of evicted communities that sit in contrast to the maps of city planner and developers but also "build solidarity and political collectively" (Maharawal and McElroy 2018: 381). Counter-maps that overlay Indigenous maps and place names on cities like Edmonton and Toronto in Canada work to denaturalize dispossession and challenge the erasure performed by colonial mapping technologies (Hunt and Stevenson 2017). To counter maps of the Mediterranean Sea as a militarized border against migrants, scholars and activists have worked to produce a "disobedient gaze" (Heller and Pezzani 2013) by "refusing the visibilities and temporalities that are performed by the statist gaze that produces migration maps" (Tazzioli and Garelli 2019: 398). By making visible pathways and spaces of migration, these projects challenge the immobile territoriality of state control and help naturalize movement or fluidity as the cornerstone of human engagement with space.

However, scholars have warned about the dangers and ambivalences that complicate the political consequences of many counter-mapping projects. Even maps created to serve emancipatory aims are simplifications of lived reality and can be co-opted into existing global power structures and associated methods of state territorial control. For example, participatory mapping projects in Belize and Nicaragua supported legal proceedings in helping Indigenous populations reclaim their rights over territory, but in doing so reaffirmed dominant understandings of the right to property as demonstrated through land use and occupation (Wainwright and Bryant 2009). As Wainwright and Bryant remind us, "these struggles unfold within an already-mapped world where one cannot elect to live outside of sovereignty, territory, or the law" (2009: 156). Furthermore, countermapping often reduces local and Indigenous concepts and social relations into two-dimensional cartographic planes of straight lines, discrete spaces, and fix temporalities (Walker and Peters 2001; Hodgson and Schroeder 2002). Doing so risks erasing the temporal and spatial fluidity of many of these relations.

One final example of resistance against the global spatial order is the concept of marronage (Roberts 2015; Bledsoe 2017; Wright 2020). The idea draws heavily from scholarship on Black geographies as an act of flight where communities of escaped slaves in the Atlantic world carved out political spaces in untamed geographies such as mountains, forests, and swamps. One of the largest such spaces was the Great Dismal Swamp, which spanned 2,000 square miles (roughly 5,200 square kilometers) along the Virginia and North Carolina Coast and provided refuges for not only escaped slaves and free Blacks but also Native Americans and outcast Europeans (Sayers 2014). But rather than just an act of fleeing from oppression, marronage is also constitutive in its aim to create "a site from which one would not need to seek refuge" (Gordon 2017: 183). This framing subverts the traditional meaning of "to marron" as abandonment by redefining the term as an act of rebellion (Balutansky 1998: 14). Thus, marronage turns the Enlightenment logics of rational and civilized landscapes on its head. Instead of envisioning untamed geographies as dark, disease-ridden, and socially backwards, marronage embraces these spaces as sites of emancipatory possibilities where new communities and solidarities can be built away from unjust political and economic structures.

The theoretical potential of marronage extends beyond slavery and the Atlantic world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Marronage as radical resistance against dominant power structures has been applied to twentieth- and twenty-first century struggles from Black movements in Brazil and the United States (Bledsoe 2017), to queer politics in urban spaces (Joyce 2017), to the fight for environmental justice (Valdivia 2021). Within these articulations of marronage is an alternative understanding of the generative spaces of global political possibility that embraces the untamed and ungoverned. As Willie Jamaal Wright argues in scholarship on fugitive groups in Mexico and North Vietnam, "Persecuted communities throughout the world have benefitted from converting natural environments into landscape of marronage" (Wright 2020: 1135). These geographies are often seen as devoid of "value" by neoliberal modernity and, hence, able to facilitate escape from its ironclad territorially bound logics. Embracing these spaces not only suggests an act of escape but also has the potential to be an invitation to reimagine the current global spatial order in new and innovative ways.

Conclusion

The modern spatial order is rooted in the notion of territoriality, and the aim of this chapter has been to show that this assumption is, as Reus-Smit and Towns write in the opening chapter to this part, "The product of historically contingent and located social processes." Traditional IR tends to treat territoriality, the boundedness associated with it, and its relationship to state power and authority as fixed assumptions of international

life. Drawing inspiration from disciplines outside IR, particularly sociology and critical geography, this chapter demonstrates that far from "hard facts" that somehow make us prisoners of a fixed geography, space and spatial assumptions are socially and historically constituted. Further, a global order based on territoriality is not just about measuring increments of ground but also about the social imaginaries that are inextricability tied to patches of earth, water, and air. Our spatial assumptions have been constituted through the complex interplay of discourses and materiality—of society and nature—and this interplay gave rise to, and reinforces, the dominance of the current spatial order based on territoriality. Recognizing the contingent nature of global spatial assumptions, then, is the first step in reconceptualizing or challenging that order.

Notes

1. Perhaps the most famous among these arguments is John Mearsheimer's "stopping power of water," which argues that large bodies of water limit global hegemony by restricting power projection. Water also protects states such as the United States and United Kingdom from foreign domination (Mearsheimer 2001: 83–84).
2. Two features of the modern international order commonly attributed to the 1648 Peace of Westphalia are the advent of sovereign equality with the end of hierarchical rule (in this case, under the Holy Roman Empire) and non-interference through the notion of *cuius regio, eius religio* (which refers to the right of state rulers to choose their own religion). However, religious choice pre-dates Westphalia and was outlined in the 1555 Peace of Augsburg, and the power of the Holy Roman Empire to influence the internal affairs of German states continued long after 1648.
3. Much has been written on the variety of social forces that informed state formation, including war-fighting (Tilly 1990) and property relations (Teschke 2003). Due to my concern with space and spatial ordering, this chapter focuses on controlling the natural environment as an understudied but key legitimating force behind state formation.
4. UNCLOS does allow for "innocent passage" (passage of vessels through territorial waters that does not threaten the state's security or stability), but the notion of "common use" or "common interest" is not applied to territorial waters or the exclusive economic zone. Hence, some commentaries have argued that UNCLOS constitutes an enclosure of the seas along the lines of John Selden rather than the adoption of Grotius's ideas (see e.g. Logue 1982).
5. Mazower (2012) describes how, during the nineteenth century, "internationalism" was adopted alongside nationalism by diverse groups that sought radical change from the prevailing European order from Marxists and anarchists, to merchants and scientists, to even the secret police. As Mazower writes, "the international had become the terrain upon which widely differing political groups and ideologies mapped their dreams and nightmares" (2012: xv).
6. International organizations are defined here as bodies that have "three or more states as members, a plenary meeting at least every ten years, and a permanent secretariat and correspondence address" (Rittberger et al. 2019: 2).

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PART V

RESISTANCE

CHAPTER 26

TRANSGRESSIVE POLITICS

International Political Sociology and Resistance

JEF HUYSMANS AND JOÃO PONTES NOGUEIRA

INTRODUCTION

On September 8, 2012 asylum seekers marched in protest against deportation laws in Germany. Later, they ripped their residence permits and posted them to the Ministry for Migration and Refugees. Prior to the march, there were other protests, including a hunger strike, one of many examples of refugee and migrant actions discussed by Maurice Stierl (2019: 35–37). Sharri Plonski (2018) opens her book on unruly politics in Israel with an event about a year later when Palestinian citizens of Israel organized a strike day to resist a program of planned evictions of a Bedouin-Arab community in Naqab. Alice Cree (2020) explores how military spouses can engage critically with the militarized process in which they are embedded, thus reflecting on how resistance can appear through vulnerability. Starting from the many protest actions in the Naura detention center on Manus Island, Umut Ozguc (2020) shows how refugees are captured by sovereign border technologies but also produce noise in the governmental system and through the entanglements of people, laws, technologies, and materials that constitute the border zone of the detention center. For her part, Iratxe Perea Ozerin (2021) examines how the individual successes of the Alterglobalization Movement resistance to the liberalization of international commerce extend into longer-term order-disrupting implications.

It is clear, then, that the world is full of resistances of various kinds. Yet, much of disciplinary International Relations (IR) focuses on the institution of hierarchies; the distribution of power; practices and technologies of domination and violence; the formation of shared norms; the reproduction of political and social arrangements. As the references above show, however, resistance is not an unfamiliar or forgotten practice, particularly for scholarship working in International Political Sociology (IPS). Yet, even IPS work uses resistance as a key concept for analyzing societies, politics, and the international less than it does technologies and techniques of arranging and reproducing order.

This part of the Handbook looks at work in IPS that analyses the social, political, and international from the point of view of resistance. The chapters explore multiple aspects

of resistance, both as a concept and a practice. How does IPS analyze social and political processes that disrupt the reproduction of order and regimes of governance? What makes a practice resistance? How has resistance been organized and sustained? What are the limits of the concept of resistance for understanding disruptive events and their significance? The chapters take resistance as a social and political process. This means that resistance is not, in the first instance, a term used to express a normative commitment to protests or to marginalized, forgotten, silenced groups and lives. It is an analytical category that draws our attention to specific social and political practices and developments. Taking resistance as a social and political process also means that the question of "What is resistance?" cannot be solved by a mechanical definition along the lines of "that what opposes a given order," after which we can just go away and study various situations in which the actors claim, or can be seen, to oppose the powers that are. It invites us instead to pay attention to the historical and contemporary organization of resistances and how resistant processes and practices have been conceptualized. The chapters in this part of the Handbook look in particular at everyday resistance, revolution, resistances in the context of ecological issues and borders, and resistances by right-wing movements.

In this opening chapter, we explore how IPS approaches the question of resistance and invites an analytical sensitivity to crevasses, cracks, and fractures that challenge political sociologies that center resistance around relations between state, society, and the international. The next section introduces how resistance organizes power analysis through negativity. The following section explains how IPS speaks to the fragmentation of resistances in the contemporary. The final section reflects on how a fracturing analysis of resistance and the international opens lines of inquiry that differ from political sociologies of state–society relations.

Resistance, power, and the logic of negativity

Our starting point is a particular understanding of IPS (Huysmans and Nogueira 2016, 2021). For us, IPS emerges from and as a lineage of critical thought engaged in the problematization of the international (Bigo and Walker 2007). As such, it distances itself from political sociologies concerned with how interactions between societies and states shape modern social formations. As a political sociology of the international, IPS investigates the indeterminate and contingent nature of boundaries that enclose the political space of sovereign states and posit the international system as an all-encompassing field of power. IPS takes world politics as multiple processes of connecting that assemble political and social formations and that exist in continuous dynamics of disjunction. That implies that instead of analyzing processes of centralization, legitimation, and institutionalization of power around more or less stable configurations of forces, IPS looks for the political in the movement of fragments, in

crevasses and fractured terrains, in the folds and lines that escape the pull of stratification along levels of organization of political space such as society–state–international–global. IPS presents itself, then, as a political sociology of the transversal. If we are to think about politics, power, and resistance in this register, our starting points cannot be the state and society but rather are the specific sites of everyday practices that produce and challenge the boundaries of politics and the relations and encounters from which they emerge. Before developing what that means in more detail, let's take a step back and reflect first on how the concept of resistance invites us to think about social and political relations.

Resistance mostly refers to movements and actions that oppose a repressive order or defy authority, norms, and expectations in the name of injustices (Caygill 2013: 2). The environmental protests connected to Greta Thunberg question the existing socio-economic and political order for discriminating against future generations. Black Lives Matter defies authorities and instituted norms for the injustices they create through racist personal and institutional practices. The protests commonly referred to as the Arab Spring that swept across Northern Africa and the Middle East in the early 2010s disrupted instituted autocratic regimes. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 overthrew the socio-economic and political order in Russia.

A first point to note here is that resistance foregrounds a conflictual understanding of social and political relations in which at least two forces work against one another rather than in harmony. This point of view has consequences for how we understand power. It moves us from a legalistic to a strategic model of power. The question of power is not about imposing a normative order, creating obedience, and sanctioning rule-following. Instead, power is about understanding practices as forces working against one another. One can think of the latter, at least metaphorically, as a war in which forces move against one another, with each resisting the movement of the other. However, it can also be understood less violently as forces questioning or challenging one another, as the concepts of contention or dispute imply. In the strategic understanding of power, there is no power without resistance, however. Only when some movements, people, or phenomena work against others, which then reciprocally counter-resist, does it make sense to speak about the exercise of power. If there is no resistance, there is no need to speak of power because there is only obedience and acting in accordance with the given (Caygill 2013: 8). This strategic model of power implies that conceptually opposing resistance to power does not really make sense. Resistance is not against power but generates power. Resistance refers to an insertion of forces that change the game from one of imposition or obedience to one of confrontation. Through doing so, power becomes an issue of interest.

The second point to note is that resistance often refers to hierarchical situations in which the conflict is with forces that repress, that have a capacity to contain, constrain, and shape lives in ways that some of those living them would prefer to change. Resistance is then reactive not just to another force but toward a given order or state of

things that institutes dominations and/or injustices. Taking this as a key element of resistance may seem obvious, but it does add something important to the strategic model of power. The strategic model foregrounds conflict as a chain of reactions, with each force relating to the other as resistance and counter-resistance. If this is all that there is to resistance, then it sounds like a physicalist model of forces working upon other forces in a horizontal way. Resistance, however, refers to movements, events, and processes that challenge a given order that represses groups of people and ways of life by denying them access to rights; marginalizing them from or within a social, economic, cultural, and/or political order; and/or exploiting them for the benefit of an elite. These issues of domination and injustice allow for a *positioning* of the forces in the strategic model of power. The forces do not simply work against one another but are differentiated in terms of whether they exercise domination or react from a position of subordination. Resistance is then no longer connected to any force in a strategic field but refers specifically to the forces exercised from a position of subordination that aim at rupturing or disrupting a given order. Resistance thus creates oppositional political, and social relations expressing a hierarchical difference between dominating and subordinated positions, with resistance expressing the latter position.

This means that resistance adds something to definitions of revolution, for example. George Lawson defines a revolution as "a collective mobilization that attempts to quickly and forcibly overthrow an existing regime in order to transform political, economic, and symbolic relations" (Lawson 2019: 5). Such a mobilization may be read as a horizontal strategic game of a confrontation between incompatible (conceptions of) political orders. Reading such collective mobilizations as resistance additionally inserts a vertical line of low and high within such a confrontation. The revolution takes the form of a mobilization from positions of subordination or exploitation. To add a few other examples, speaking of right-wing resistance today implies, at times, a framing of a cultural war in which the right-wing cultural and racial identity is seen as being suppressed by globalist liberals. Class conflict is not between two equally positioned parties but between a dominant class of capitalist elites and a subordinated class of workers. Migrant resistance is mostly conceptualized as taking place from a position of exclusion, discrimination, and/or exploitation.

Combining a strategic view of power relations with a hierarchical view of order raises a challenge for understanding the order-transforming nature of resistances. If domination can only exist in relation to resistances because otherwise there is no domination but simply hierarchical positions inscribed in a natural order of things, then it raises a question about whether resistance is outside or inside the existing order. In resistance analysis, the conception of political order to some extent always already includes resistance internally, as a component of the order. Political orders work through conflicts on unequal distribution of values and the institutionalizations of hierarchies linked to it. The resistant forces are a condition for such conflicts, and thus for politics, to emerge. This raises the question of whether resistance is incorporated or,

in more political terminology, co-opted in the internal formation and reformation of that order. However, for resistance to be a force of disruption, it always also must be positioned somehow externally to the order, given that it seeks to overthrow or rupture that order and develop a new arrangement. Dialectics captures this ambivalence by understanding history as moving by means of the forces exercised through contradictory positions—domination and subordination, master and slave, capital and labor—that both are part of a given order. The latter is set in motion by resistances challenging the historically given order of which they are part, aiming to transcend it into a different state of affairs that will generate a new contradiction, and so on for ever or until the emancipatory ideal has been reached in which contradictory positions—and thus resistance—are no longer present.

Analyses of resistance work in relation to a structural conception of situations. The technical term of this structural conception of the social and political is "negativity." At its core is the negative and reactive positioning of forces that work against a given order; resistance is a "being against," a practice of opposing something that exists. This reactive characteristic of resistance brings Stephan Scheel (2019), for example, to argue for a different understanding of how migrants bear upon and challenge existing institutional mechanisms and orders. Conceptualized as a negative force within a horizon of social transformation of which it is a necessary condition, resistance remains dependent on that which it opposes, thus limiting the possibilities of affirmative and creative politics. Yet, "negativity" is not the same as negation. Resistance is mostly not just against but also often aims at reconfiguring order to address exclusions, discriminations, injustices. Negativity always implies positivity—mobilizations around a collective project with the aim of rupturing an existing order so that a "better" social formation can be created (Coole 2000: 2–6). In such a dialectic politics, there can be no politics without the representation of orders of collective life and of processes to institute and reproduce this collective life. Therefore resistance is about maintaining a gap between an instituted world and its limits (Coole 2000: 46). The creativity Scheel is asking for works differently, however. He asks for taking serious dispersed, often uncoordinated practices that do not between them articulate an alternative order but do change the terrain which they enact. (We will expand on how such a conception of transgressive politics pokes at the logic of negativity in the next section).

To make this structural relation transcendent rather than reproductive of the existing order, resistance is organized through movements that mobilize and organize capacities to seriously disrupt this order. The political sociology of resistance is therefore never simply about actual manifestations of this structural logic but also about understanding how the resisting forces are organized to exercise significant disruptive force onto an existing order. For example, a resistance analysis is never simply about the structure of class relations but always also about how a subordinated class is organized into a political force that challenges class relations. Or, it is about how social movements are organized and use opportunity structures and alternative framings to challenge

discriminations against social groups/identities. The conditions of possibility for a resistance movement to emerge and changes in the strategies and organizational forms of such movements are a key part of political sociologies of resistance. They include literatures on social movements, revolutionary organizations, and infra-political and everyday resistances.

So far, we have introduced briefly how the concept of resistance structures political analysis through a dual conception of power that combines a horizontal view of conflicts between forces with a hierarchical understanding of relations of domination. We also highlighted that this conception implies a logic of negativity. The concept of resistance introduces a binary structure in which resistant practices oppose a given political order and thus are dependent, for their political significance, on reacting to that what already exists in the name of something they desire to put in its place. We concluded with noting that the structural logic of negativity is brought into play by collective mobilizations organized through resisting movements. In the next section, we look at how some of the work related to IPS has engaged with this logic of negativity that defines much of resistance analysis.[1]

Fracturing resistance: IPS between negativity and multiplicity

There is a vast sociological literature conceptualizing, explaining, and describing historical enactments of this logic of negativity and the organization and emergence of resistant movements: the study of revolutions (Lawson 2019), social movements (Della Porta and Diani 2015), contention (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2004), dissent (Bleiker 2000), acts of citizenship (Isin and Nielsen 2008), and (global) civil society (Buckley 2013). Work published in the journal *International Political Sociology* and presented at IPS sections at conferences continues to use this framing of resistance. However, IPS also explores the limits of these approaches. In particular, it experiments with developing analytical points of view that are more attuned to fragmented and everyday transgressive politics that fracture the logic of negativity. Fragmentation is here not conceptualized as a moment or phase in which political order breaks down and is waiting to be reintegrated into a new political order. The terrains of life that this IPS seeks to understand are *essentially* cracked; they are defined through the crevasses and folds rather than through their relation to order or unity that smooths over the cracks to make an integrated plane. Fragmentation is thus taken as the condition of existence of social and political relations. To avoid implicitly inviting reintroductions of a fragmentation/integration dialectic, we prefer to speak of fracturing. This section focuses on conceptions of transgressive politics that fracture resistance.

An interest in the fracturing of resistance links IPS to a set of issues that arose for social movement studies when protests like the anti-globalization movement of the 1990s emerged. These movements aimed at resisting an existing order but were

organized differently from then existing social movements. They operated through a more fragmented, diffuse, and thus less integrative organization than social movements. They also seemed to not fit well with the strong dichotomies that organize the logic of negativity in resistance thought, such as dissent and collaboration, opposition and co-optation, inside and outside of instituted power structures. For example, Carl Death (2010: 235) starts his search for an alternative conceptualization of the power of global protest movements with the following observation:

> the contours of recent protests, with their jet-setting intellectuals wearing Banksy T-shirts, indigenous activists wielding Sony Handycams, solicitors and publicists on quick dial, private foundation funding and often ambiguous relationship to the state and international institutions, belie such [dichotomous] framings.

Similarly, analyses of migrant resistances in the European Union have raised limits of understanding resistance in terms of collective mobilization. In using the latter conceptions of resistance, one tends to inscribe an organizational capacity, intention, and collective subjectivity to migrants who, in many situations, do not express or refer to themselves as a collective interest formation (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos 2008: 29–30). Moreover, migrants often cannot organize themselves into a collective movement because they are only temporarily in a place, out of their own desire to move on or as a result of migration management agencies moving them around (Tazzioli 2020). Maurice Stierl (2019: 14) introduces his book on migrant resistances as follows:

> What did drive my research throughout … was the desire to probe and challenge dominant conceptions of resistance, in particular those that seemed to reserve the label of "resistant subject" solely for individuals—often white, middle-class, male, European, citizen—engaged in highly visible, seemingly unified, and at times spectacular contestations of (state) authorities and systems of power. Often framed as a global civil society expressing dissent in the form of collective social movements, social movement theory has regularly failed to grasp the importance of migrant struggles that materialise and are politically transformative in different but significant ways.

These and similar observations have led to a revisiting of the category of resistance (e.g. Caygill 2013; Checchi 2021; Amoore 2005; Hoy 2004) and an intense interest in how to conceptualize the organization of dispersed protests and movements (Nunes 2021) and revolutions (Lawson 2019; Selbin 2019). One of the key contentions has been whether more diffuse actions that challenge and resist institutionalized governing practices should be understood and analyzed as resistance at all. Although Stierl retains the concept of resistance, he notes that resistance has been associated with more sustained modes of organization, a clearer articulated project of collective subjectivity

and intention, and a sustained view on an alternative to the existing order than the actions he studies. He therefore seeks to reframe the concept of resistance so that it speaks to the fragmented contentious practices he studies. Similar issues have arisen in the rethinking of agency and politics that draw on anarchist lineages of thought (Rossdale 2010; Newman 2012).

Not everyone agrees that a fracturing of protest landscapes should drive the reconceptualization of notions of transgressive politics, such as resistance and revolution, however. For some, fracturing is, at best, a distraction from how resistant power can actually create change. For example, George Lawson notes in his survey and conceptualization of revolutions that some of these fractured actions and movements that are referred to as revolutionary are too fleeting and lack a sense of a collective program. They therefore cannot sustain the strong sense of affective solidarity that is required for revolutions to be possible (Lawson 2019: 231–233). In such an approach, the dispersed movements will remain politically quite insignificant until they can organize themselves or be organized into a movement that has a sustained capacity for collective mobilization. Seeking to fracture concepts like revolution then leads to a misunderstanding of how resistances can be socially and politically powerful. It is thus important to note that not all work associated with IPS simply embraces fracturing modes of practice. There is significant work that focuses on how transgressive contentions create and work through sustained framings,[2] organizational identification, and mobilization in the name of alternative visions of political order and conceptions of justice and injustice (see Selbin, this volume).

Yet, the observation that transgressive politics operate, or can operate, through diffuse acts of disruption and instances of dissent without global fault lines and sustained mobilization organized in and through a social movement remains a key condition for rethinking resistances in the cracks of global politics and the intellectual crevasses of disciplinary thought. This question of the social and political organization and significance of resistance when "there is no grand refusal, only dispersed and shifting points of resistance, or forms of counter-conduct" (Death 2010: 239) has been, and remains, a main driver of work in IPS that critically pokes at the logic of negativity. It is these lines of thought that we draw on and foreground in our discussion of resistance below. We introduce two different lines of thought that analytically fracture resistance and interrogate its logic of negativity: (i) a situationist line that conceptualizes the political and social importance of dispersed and uncoordinated everyday practices that from a strategic point of view seem to be simply little nothings and (ii) a line of thought that challenges oppositional conceptions and the logic of negativity, thus pushing the concept of resistance to, and possibly beyond, its limits.

Situationist conceptions of resistance

Situationist approaches explore the transgressive power of uncoordinated instances of protest and everyday subversive appropriations. The analytical focus changes from fragmenting social movements and the organizational problems it poses to the transformative capacity of what appear as little nothings (Bayart, Mbembe, and Toulabor 2008: 11; Macherey 2009). The latter refers to ordinary habits, languages, objects, practices, and situations that at first sight seem to be politically insignificant (Guillaume 2011). More specifically, the lead question shifts from the nature and organization of social mobilization to the significance of scattered, uncoordinated practices of appropriation, disobedience, and deviations that take place in ordinary engagements in which people find themselves. For example, many migrants blocked at borders or in villages or cities perform various acts that are sometimes referred to as resistances (e.g. falsifying identity, refusing finger printing, running away, linking up with activist networks). Although they are significant for the individual migrants, they do not seem to operate as a strategic counter-force with a capacity to seriously transform the existing migration regimes. Often, they have a rather ordinary function of helping individual migrants to continue their journey in the face of institutional practices that are blocking or slowing them (Stierl 2019: 58, 91). Situationist approaches to resistance explore how such events and practices are, nevertheless, significant in resisting structures of control and repression and how they enact broader disputes, controversies, and conflicts.

Different from the approaches that draw on concepts of complexity and multiplicity to challenge the logic of negativity (see next section), situationist approaches tend to inscribe appropriations, dissent, and deviation within a logic of negativity. Little nothings gain their political significance from their opposition, not strategically mobilized but uncoordinatedly positioned, to a dominant order. Their political significance depends on an overarching dichotomous positioning of subjects in situations of weakness to structures and subjects in a position of strength and domination. However, these approaches do poke quite significantly at how the logic of negativity translates into strategic organization around a political project. There is a significant difference between conceptualizing counter-force through disruptions created by diffused and uncoordinated little nothings and counter-conduct that demands coordinated organization of solidarities that can be mobilized in a sustained way for the creation of an alternative order. In situationist sociologies, the little nothings are not practices of mass protest but practices of making life livable in often dire circumstances. Yet, rather than being simply reproductive of or meaningless within the power relations that are, they actively shape the situation in ways that deviate from the techniques and infrastructure of control that a given order institutes (see Guillaume and Lemay-Hébert, this volume).

One of the interesting illustrations of how this line of thought opens toward distinctive analyses of transgressive politics is work that intertwines resilience and resistance. Resilience is often seen as a practice of coping with adverse or difficult

situations. It draws attention to how people try to make their daily lives livable and, in doing so, acquiesce to the situation. It appears as a practice of adjusting to the state of things, of making the state of things livable rather than seeking to change the injustices and violence that are produced by it. Resilience is therefore often read in opposition to resistance; rather than mobilizing for changes to the situation, resilience invites ways of living within the situation of repression or control. Resilience is also linked to individualized or community practices, thus working against oppositional collective mobilization. The situationist understanding of resistance that we outlined above, however, allows for a different interpretation, one in which the practices of resilience are intimately linked to resistance. Caitlin Ryan (2015) has argued for such a reading of Palestinian women practicing *Sumud*. *Sumud* is an everyday practice of making daily life livable under conditions of repression, occupation, and (more broadly) power relations that seriously constrain strategic abilities to transform them. By continuing to make daily life possible, the women also make it possible to stay in their homes, and thus on the land, rather than moving out to places where life might be easier. They do so in the face of pressure, including violent pressure, to leave. *Sumud* is a practice of resilience, an everyday practice of continuing to make life doable and give it moments of normality; so not really a form of resistance. However, drawing on de Certeau (1980) and especially Scott (1985), Ryan explains how *Sumud* as everyday mediations and appropriations has resistant qualities in the context of repression of Palestinians. Staying on the land is a mode of resisting occupation, retaining a possibility of Palestinian self-determination, and asserting the dignity of Palestinian women in the face of attempts at removal. In Ryan's reading, *Sumud* combines uncoordinated, everyday mediations to make life valuable and doable—to create a sense of normality in situations of repression—with the more strategic aims of resisting removal from land and retaining the possibility of Palestinian self-determination. Ryan's work questions the sharp separation between acquiescent resilience and resistance by retaining a link between the everyday and the strategic fault lines. Note that, in this approach, not all everyday practices of resilience can be read as resistant. There is an overarching strategic situation—occupation and state power seeking to move Palestinians out of their homes—that makes the resilient practices resistant. It is because the everyday practices take place in a context also defined by a strategic fault line between dominated and dominating and the specific enactment of the domination through land appropriation and destruction of houses that everyday resilient practices are resistant.

In doing so, Ryan implicitly demonstrates how the concept of resistance is bound to a strategic logic of negativity. The everyday, resilient practices are not explicitly coordinated or strategically organized by a social movement. They are quotidian practices in that sense. However, they analytically gain collective significance as resistance by situating them in a strategic political struggle over land and an instituted order of domination. Why, then, retain the concept of resilience if what actually matters politically is its resistant rather than resilient qualities? As Ghassan Hage (2015) has

argued, it is analytically and politically significant to retain the importance of resilience in itself. He refers to how Palestinian families read children stories to their children, sing them to sleep, and, we can extend, talk about the weather, the washing, the quality of vegetables in the local shop, and so on. These give life an element of normality. In resistance terms, this seems trivial and something of a waste—"How can you do this while living in conditions of colonial repression?" Yet, it makes for a life that is not consumed by resistance but is, nevertheless, lived in resistance. If consumed by resistance, by seeing and challenging continuously the binary between the dominant and repressed, resistance risks losing that which it seeks to protect—a decent life, a life with a sense of normality, dignity, and so on. Ryan's analysis is a good example of an analytical disposition that invites political sociologies and anthropologies that connect resilience to resistance but without reducing resilience to its functionality of coping with the situation or to being simply an expression of strategic actions of resistance. While her piece is indicative of how the concept of resistance pulls the analysis into a logic of negativity, it also questions reducing resistance analysis to the explicit enactment of negativity. By combining resilience and resistance, her approach negotiates between the necessity of negativity for resistant politics and the need to avoid making negativity an all-consuming logic, which discards the value of everyday life either by rendering it as acquiescence or by reducing its meaning to its contributions to strategic mobilization.[3]

Questioning binaries: Complexity and multiplicity

IPS also challenges the logic of negativity head on by questioning the dyadic constitution of relations that the concept of resistance invites. The dyadic reasoning of resistance conceptualizes politics in terms of two opposing forces that constitute an overarching unitary field of confrontation which links everything that is significant to this confrontation. What happens to the concept of resistance if we take the point of view that fractures resistance into multiplicity, into a plurality of relations that cannot be brought back to a binary opposition between friend and enemy, dominant and dominated, included and excluded?

Leonie Ansems de Vries and Doerthe Rosenow (2015) develop an approach to resistance that "opposes the opposition." They start from the observation that activists challenging anti-genetic modification of organisms organize, or are drawn into, a dyadic politics of pro-genetically modified organisms (GMO) versus anti-GMO. In doing so, they enact not simply a political binary but also a binary understanding of life as consisting of either non-GMO—authentic—or GMO—non-authentic, with one being preferrable and/or superior to the other, thus legitimizing the destruction of one or the other (Ansems de Vries and Rosenow 2015: 1119). Ansems de Vries and Rosenow (2015: 1121–1124) draw on biological knowledge which shows that life does not work

through such neat binaries but is messy and uncontrollable. Life is complex rather than binary and so is the politics of protest, for them. From this observation, they then raise questions about the limits of transgressive politics that seek to enact clear binary oppositions, such as the one they start from between pro- and anti-GMO movements. Enacting overarching binaries are problematic for them because they can lead to "a demarcation between forms of life to be fostered (those that are natural, harmonious and authentic) and forms of life to be excluded or destroyed" (Ansems de Vries and Rosenow 2015: 1126).

What does complexity mean here? Following Mol and Law (2002: 1), complexity means that "things relate but do not add up." Activities, organisms, things move in relation to one another, but their relationality cannot be understood by means of an overarching unity. This is a quite challenging proposition given that social sciences tend to make a plurality of relations intelligible by linking them to something like "society," "state," or "capitalism." For example, relations between states are explained in reference to an anarchical international system; relations between social forces and fields are understood in how they operate in relation to the state or how they are part of a global civil society; class struggle makes sense within the development of capitalism. Complexity, here, is thus a concept that challenges conceptions of politics and the social as a problem of one world/many worlds (Walker 1988).

Complexity takes issue not only with unities—the search for order in chaos—but also with dialectic thought, which reduces the many to two whose opposition organizes and drives politics and the social. Does that mean complexity refers to simply "many," a collection of instances and relations, a pluralism that simply multiplies discrete interests, perspectives, organizations and has them existing as separate categories in juxtaposition? Not really. Instead of many, it thinks in terms of "more than one [or two] but less than many" (Mol and Law 2002: 11). This means that positions, orders, programs, interests in a particular situation do not exist independently from one another but are shaping the situation in their partial connecting. The problem is then to conceptualize this "partial connecting": a relationality that neither fragments multiple processes into simply "many" nor unifies them into a whole or a dialectic relation between two. The attention is not recognizing or asserting which are the authentic and which the inauthentic, which are orthodox and which the heterodox positions/orders, but on the material connections that create heterogenous situations. The key issue for understanding activism, for example, is not who or what it opposes but how activist practices and processes materially create situations, for example instances of summit diplomacy.[4] They become an active part of moments of summit diplomacy as well as life in the cities and neighborhoods where these take place. The shaping of the terrain of summit diplomacy emerges from these limited but multiple relations partially working in relation to one another. As a result, what may be thought of "as a single object (e.g. an instance of summit diplomacy) may appear to be more than one" (Mol 2002: vii). The summit is not enacted in the same way by anti-globalization protest and by the local

commercial practices and the diplomatic meetings. Yet, during the 1990s, these were closely intertwined in defining "economic summits."

In Mol's terms, such multiplicity is not a form of perspectivism that introduces multiple knowledges or logics as perspectives that simply are put next to one another as different lenses without asking how, in between them, they shape an event or an object of interest. Multiplicity focuses on the doing; how the doing of an object or event takes place in the relation in between multiple modes of doing (Mol 2002). As a result, the object decenters. Instances of summit diplomacy emerge from the entangling of multiple different practices. They appear as a meshwork and not as a center—the summit as the meetings of diplomats in a building—which others try to permeate and influence from the outside. As a result, instances of summit diplomacy are also simultaneously similar and different because of the particular entanglements shaping it. Multiplicity, thus, does not fix objects or events in a contested and accidental history but gives them a complex present, too, a present in which their identities are fragile and may differ between sites. This concept of multiplicity avoids a notion of complexity that simply means that there are too many things in life for us to fully understand how life works. It is also different from complexity theory as a systemic theory that is characterized by the question of global interconnections—how a small thing, a little nothing, can create a complex global chain of causalities leading to a big event (a butterfly creating a storm).

The binary positioning logic that resistance tends to invite becomes a problematic issue from this point of view. The key driver of change is no longer understood in terms of how people enact themselves into collective subjects through practices of (self-)representation and recognition and through mobilizing against instituted formations (see also Foucault 1976: 125–127). The drivers of change are the material emergence of dispersed modes of situated living and how they shape conditions of life through entangling with other practices. Relating in situated togetherness does not mean that politics is harmonious or a practice of attuning. There is a lot of conflict in complexity, but the relations of "force" do not point to a war-like organization but a more fluid and dispersed enactment of controversies and disputes (Huysmans and Nogueira 2016). Conceptually, it may read a little heavy-handed but what these approaches foreground are quite familiar developments and practices. When groups of migrants arrive in the neighborhoods of cities or villages, they entangle into lived lives and material infrastructures. In doing so, they change the material realities of life and the site. Such continuous encounters are not necessarily harmonious; they involve conflicts, disputes, compromises, ignoring, violence, and so on. Yet, the transformative force does not really derive from resistance but from the presence of people and life-creating happenings (e.g. Ansems de Vries 2016; de Genova 2010; Eliçabe et al. 2009).

Ansems de Vries and Rosenow (2015) use the concept of encounter to invite a reading of activism that is more than a binary but less than just many. Encounters are not between positions but the meeting of differences. As opposition, two forces are always somehow external to one another as two positions in contradiction rather than simply

different to one another. Encounters allow us to think the fragmented, less-organized-than-social-movements activities of "resistance" as significant within the shaping of situations through the work they do in the partial connecting with other activists, the GMO companies, the law, scientists, nature. Stephan Scheel (2019) also uses the concept of "encounter" to understand the partial autonomy of migrants without having to position them as a force in opposition to the European Union border regimes. He questions the value of the concept of resistance because it always positions migrants as reactive to, rather than part of, the shaping of borders, neighborhoods, transport, and so on. Encounters allow him to introduce how a biometric visa regime does not simply exist in its technological and bureaucratic processes but emerges between multiple daily encounters of migrants, office workers, databases, private contractors, and sites. In the in-between of these encounters, bordering is configured and reconfigured. The sense of bordering emerges from heterogeneous connections that disrupt binary positionings of one unit (e.g. the European Union) versus another (e.g. the migrants). Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos (2008) develop a similar approach. They displace "resistance" with "escape" and "imperceptible politics." For them, the transformative force of migrant practices does not derive from mobilizing for a better society in general. Instead, it works unintentionally by shifting the terrain they move through, thus creating new material realities that cannot be ignored. The lines of escape are then lines through which migration and regimes of control become entangled and reconstitute themselves and the terrains they enact (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos 2008: 75).

Although these material practices and creations are seen (and sometimes self-identify) as subversive, alternative, and so on, the work they do is not interpreted negatively as against but rather positively as dwellings or pathways within and through which life is lived (Ingold 2011). They are brought into knowledge as lines of flight rather than resistances. Lines of flight put things into flight; they create vacillations, fluctuations, and disorganization of situations. Unlike resistance, however, lines of flight are not dichotomously or dialectically constituted (Zourabichvili 2012: 176). Instead, they emerge from within the differential entangling of, for example, migrants, shops, border guards, security technologies, soup kitchens, and so on. An encounter, in the Deleuzian reading used by Ansems de Vries and Rosenow (2015: 1120), is thus always partially ungrounding in the sense that it allows for "responses to situations that are 'as-yet unthought'." However, this ungrounding is not a negative process of critique as such but always already a process of re-grounding. The meshing of different points of views partially structures a situation and partially shapes the modalities of practice and understanding and thus the way borders, boundaries, and limits are enacted. This process is not one of moving from an "opening" to a "closure" but one of a continuous becoming of repetition and difference without beginning and end. Life is always emergent rather than a linear causal development: "The idea of life as static, linear and mechanical is countered with concepts that emphasise its creativity, art, non-

reproducible originality, and the impossibility of planning due to a lack of choreography" (Ansems de Vries and Rosenow 2015: 1123). This line of thought thus seeks to break away from the logic of negativity by means of two closely related moves: one from opposition to multiplicity and a second from repression and resistance to creativity.

Both situationist and complexity-as-multiplicity lines of thought are partly informed by a deadlock that negativity often creates for resistance analyses that focus on the force of dispersed micro practices. If ordinary, fractured events and practices are positioned as reactions to a dominant order and their significance depends on gathering force to overthrow that dominant order in the name of an alternative order, they easily appear as insignificant. They do not necessarily rally around an alternative vision of political order; they are diffuse, with little to no explicit organization into a unified counter-force. When facing various axes of global domination, such analysis of resistance tends to fall into desperation. When faced with what looks like overwhelming and well-organized forces that, between them, sustain the existing order of domination, change seems impossible. For example, Coleman's (2013) analysis of mobilizations of farmers in Colombia against dispossessions explains the failures of local and dispersed resistances because they are facing an overwhelming national and global order in which state apparatuses exercise violence, exploitations, and other forms of repression in support of a global, neoliberal ordering represented by multinational corporations. The resistance movements are dwarfed in the face of a highly institutionalized repressive state and a global, exploitative, and repressive system. Faced with such an order of domination, the resistances Coleman looks at turn into what she calls "docile dissent." The neoliberal order first destroys dissent and then rebuilds "acceptable" dissent based on a consensual rather than conflictual logic, in which questions of dispossession have no place. She concludes, "This domestication of dissent can thus be viewed as complementing the armed elimination of political struggle, and as consolidating the abandonment of the population to the dictates of the market" (Coleman 2013: 184).

The analyses that look at how transgressive politics takes place through little practices and in multiplicity thus risk ending up where the situationist Debord ended up (Caygill 2013: 174–182). By analyzing resistance in the shadow of the power of the dominant order, the dominant order appears as so dominant that situated mobilizations and practices end up being crushed, functionalized, ignored, and generally considered as not being able to create durable change to the existing order of things. The structure of negativity then leads to an impasse for micropolitical understandings of resistance and thus invites (politically and normatively) a return to thinking in terms of a global or major revolutionary mobilization.

Conceptualizing the relation between resistance and acquiescence through the uncoordinated creativity of micro practices and displacing binary conceptions of micropolitics as multiplicity are two distinct ways of tackling this deadlock that resistance analysis invites. It opens toward analytics of transgressive politics that

remain sensitive to the creativity of life. It mirrors a difference within situationist thought on resistance and revolution between Vaneigem (1967) and Debord (1967). While Debord focused on the mechanisms, structures, and orders of domination and, in doing so, ended in a desperate position in which situated, everyday practices did end up being crushed under the weight of domination, Vaneigem emphasized the creative, emergent nature of life. He foregrounded the pleasure rather than the death principle to understand the revolutionary qualities of everyday life and change. For Vaneigem, the intensification of life, rather than the resistance to oppression, defines the revolution (Caygill 2013: 174–182).

In this section, we introduced how IPS also contains work on resistance and transgressive politics that questions the logic of negativity, which is central to how the concept of resistance analytically structures transgressive politics. In line with our understanding of IPS as exploring the international, social, and political from its crevasses and cracks, the section introduces some lines of thought that engage with a fracturing of negativity to invite reflections and debate on the limits of understanding transgressive politics as resistance. In particular, we introduced how exploring the fracturing of resistance connects IPS to (i) observations of transgressive political actions since the 1990s that worked in dispersed and fragmented ways; (ii) situationist approaches that seek to understand the political significance of everyday events and practices and, more generally, micropolitics; and (iii) approaches that question the use of binary oppositions by conceptualizing transgressive politics as multiplicity and complexity.[5]

In the next section, we return to the question of the international and focus on how work in IPS on transgressive politics distances itself from political sociologies concerned with the dynamic interactions between society and state. It opens toward an IPS that foregrounds experimenting with a transversal analytic of transgressive politics that fractures the international and for which the social and political do not align with state/society relations.

Transversalizing transgressive politics: From state–society relations to folds

This section returns to the questions of "the international" and the "local/global." How does IPS work the "local/global" and "the international" in its situationist and multiplicities-oriented point of view? How does the international render the field of forces in which resistance emerges? The challenge is to articulate analytics of resistance that escape the state/society framework usually deployed to think resistance —and the international—politically as, for instance, in studies of societal movements fighting neoliberal agendas promoted by states and global governance institutions. Contemporary studies on transnational social movements strongly associate resistance

to hegemonic power structures to the formation of a global civil society engaged in progressive agendas of transformation. As we argued above, such moves to rescale politics globally tended to reinstate the binaries that limit resistance to reactive and oppositional logics, reducing its creative potential. However, since the end of the first decade of this century, the alternative globalization movement has declined, giving way to what some have called "insurrectional" movements (Nunes 2021). Since then, significant research has focused on these new modalities of resistance, based on different forms of organization and political rationales. In this section, we discuss how this shift from a globalized state/society framework of resistance to the more fractured practices of the new generation of protest and contestation contributed to IPS's challenge to rethink the international transversally. Finally, we discuss how the subsequent retreat of these more "horizontal" modes of resistance brought back calls for the return to vertical and oppositional politics, and how IPS engages with these debates. We will suggest that one way to avoid falling back into the logics of negativity is to think of the movement of politics through the concept of the fold.

The above-mentioned return to "old politics" differs in many ways from the politics of global social movements rising at the turn of the century (Badiou 2012). However, it also takes as its starting point the positing of a political center against which social forces are organized—be it the class fractions and elites controlling global political economy apparatuses or hegemonic states coordinating new forms of regulation and coordination of global governance. Transnational social movements in the early 2000s sought to articulate wide-ranging strategies of resistance and emancipation in the terrain of global civil society. But resisting at the global level required the drawing of boundaries that defined what it was these new actors were fighting to overcome and transform. Even though it expressed a decentered perspective on power relations, global civil society found itself either not being oppositional enough or participating too much in the politics of global governance. The effort to take politics "beyond the international" and to overcome the conservatism of its anarchical logic fails on account of its reliance on the belief in challenging boundaries as the defining move of a global emancipatory politics (Colás 2004; Maiguashca 2003; Rupert 2004; Mittleman and Chin 2005).

As stated earlier, IPS approaches the international as a realm defined by boundaries and its related practices of surveillance, policing, and reproduction. As such, it challenges "the international" as a given historical system that generates a particular analytical point of view and raises questions such as "What does it mean to work from the lines, the cracks, the everyday rather than state-society relations within an international system?," "How, then, can we think resistance from a point of view that seeks to move away from state–society relations embedded within the international?" One of the problems is that starting from a dominant order tends to crush the situated into insignificance (Caygill 2013).

How can such an approach to resistance translate into addressing the many problems that beset world politics? It's a complicated question, especially because we are used to thinking about the political in terms of big structures of power and globally extended processes. When we turn to a situationist analysis informed by a view of the international as a fractured space of multiplicities, we are usually confronted by issues of scale. In other words, we are faced with the challenge mentioned in the previous section, of tracing the connections through which micro processes affect politics at "broader" levels of organization and interaction. This is certainly not a new problem for students of IR. However, in the context of recent debates on resistance, it has gained new relevance as, for instance, we see in the rich literature on global/local relations (Drainville 2012; Eschle and Maiguashca 2005; Mittleman and Chin 2005; Motta and Nilsen 2011). The Colombian anthropologist Arturo Escobar, for instance, engaged with the challenge of thinking the politics of social movements in contemporary world politics through the notions of networks and assemblages because they offer better possibilities to see how social things are made up by meshes of different elements that are not homogenized but combined in their multiplicity (Escobar and Osterweil 2010; see also Merriman 2012). First, for Escobar, seeing transnational movements through these lenses helps us understand how they operate at different levels—transversally—organizing their political action through distributed networks instead of vertical structures of direct control. For our argument, two points are important: first, when looking at social movements as mesh-works of heterogeneous components operating at different levels, it becomes difficult to identify unified and cohesive practices of resistance in a specific field of struggles. In fact, in this perspective, capitalism and the state do not necessarily confront resistance through homogenizing practices either, but rather by what Escobar calls "peripheral polymorphy" or differentiated strategies of cooptation and control that both capture and free up flows that escape from it. Hence the argument that "there can never be pure opposition or resistance" (Escobar and Osterweil 2010: 205). Second, Escobar sees the problem presented by the decentered view of the social and asks "how to become dispersed without excessive fragmentation and retaining the capacity to mount significant resistance to the new strategies of machinic enslavement?" His answer lies in the local histories produced by social movements in the "borders of the modern colonial world system," which offer novel ways of knowing modes of domination and resistance (Escobar and Osterweil 2010: 191, 207).

Escobar's investigations on new forms of organization of social movements are a good example of the dilemmas of global civil society initiatives such as the World Social Forum during the first decade of the 2000s, including the conceptual difficulties of scaling resistance up or down the spaces of world politics (Escobar 2008; Amoore and Langley 2003). IPS is sympathetic but skeptical of the spatial imagination that reorganizes the international into global/local dynamics, however. Given its concern with the practices that define the boundaries of the international, IPS sees their displacement toward wider or narrower scales as misguided answers to the narrowness

of state-centric perspectives of world politics. The shift to a global scale would seem to express a transformation toward a post-international world in which more complex and densely institutionalized relations could be governed on a global scale. At the same time, local actors could engage transnationally through networks connected through new organizational and communication technologies, often claiming an authenticity and grounding normally lacking in elite-controlled global institutions. For IPS, the rescaling of world politics doesn't express an epochal change in the logic of the modern international, but it rather points to an intensification of boundary producing practices that define the international realm in the first place.

The notion of a global civil society was shaped largely on the basis of a belief that decoupling practices of bordering from territorially defined political spaces would open new potential for the actions of the generation of social movements emerging in the context of post-Cold War globalization. This new civil society was both a place where politics could be freer from state control and repression and a distinctive constituency. Civil society forums became instances where a collective association of movements constructed their identity as subjects of resistance and spoke with a single voice to multilateral institutions, states, corporations, banks, and so forth. It became common for global governance summits (such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank, G20, and BRICs countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, United Arab Emirates), among others) to host simultaneous civil society gatherings, which would set goals and agendas to be negotiated/submitted with/to the officials (see Thörn, this volume). The growing proximity of global civil society actors to institutions of governance raised questions about the risks of co-optation as well as about how these strategies contributed to a politics of resistance. Louise Amoore and Paul Langley (2003: 106) summarize the problem: "The ability to transgress political boundaries, to organize transnationally and even to achieve democratic transformation does not necessarily and always challenge entrenched forms of domination and exclusion" (on the ambiguities of resistance, see Drolet, this volume). The co-optation of "reasonable" criticism, simultaneously works to exclude "unreasonable" critique.

The critique of the inherent transformative logic of global civil society led to efforts, such as Escobar's (2008), to move beyond thinking resistance through scaling up politics or transgressing boundaries, to the analysis of the articulation between the fluidity of sites of struggle, the differential relations of forces, the modes of organization of social movements and their strategies and practices. We find, for instance, the revaluation of the values, cultures, and practices grown out of the quotidian encounter of grounded communities of purpose who, because of their more authentic experience to the sources of exclusions and injustices, were seen as the subjects of "real" resistance (Guillaume 2011; Scott 2013). Or, the search for different forms of articulation between global and local levels of analysis and action in order to devise more effective transnational strategies and avoid co-optation by global elites and institutions (Maiguas

hca 2003; Perea Ozerin 2020). The ultimate decline of the alter-globalization movement since the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century led to what some commentators labelled "the end of horizontalism" and the advocacy of populist politics and neo-Leninist forms of political organization (or verticalism). These developments expressed the dilemmas of social movements in the past few decades and presented new challenges for a political sociology in search of analytical tools to grasp the constant metamorphoses, fracturing, and persistent heterogeneity of resistance politics (Bulley 2016; Dean 2019; Nunes 2021). To what extent is the anti-globalization/global civil society moment (or movements) still a prominent force? It feels to us that it has fragmented into diverse formations (anti-austerity/anti-capitalism, climate justice, anti-racism, etc.) and also melded into specific eruptions (Linklater 1998).

Recent works in IPS on migration are exemplary in how they focus on the multiple rationalities at work in particular regimes of power, as well as on the indeterminate trajectories and entanglement of forces across different contexts. In their study of migration governance in Indonesia, McNevin, Missbach, and Mulyana (2016) show how strategies of control of illegal migration to Australia "generate unpredictable disruptions" that transform the intended objectives into much less coherent sets of actions and practices (McNevin, Missbach, and Mulyana 2016). For instance, programs designed to prevent local fishermen from rescuing migrants in peril at sea by the counter-smuggling campaign funded by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) appealed to their religious sentiments by means of a humanitarian rationale. According to the campaign, not rescuing people at sea was a humanitarian act because it prevented migrants attempting the perilous crossing and protected them from evil smugglers. However, the fishermen insisted on spontaneous acts of rescue, moved by the same religious beliefs that were supposed to make them conform to the conduct promoted by their imams and priests. McNevin makes a compelling argument about how modes of subversion emerge folded in governmental power. Instead of seeing counter-conduct as an inevitable part of the process of reproduction of governmental power, she resorts to ethnographic methods to show how technologies of control break down as they unfold on the ground, inverting how the power–resistance relation is conceptualized in governmentality studies and focusing instead on how counter-conduct subverts and transforms the operation of power. An IPS of transgression will take power and resistance as indistinguishable in their entanglements and analyze how forces affect one another in different contexts. These are unlikely to be clearly defined by levels and boundaries, and more likely along multiple dimensions and transversal lines connecting micro and macro structures and fields through everyday practices (also see Guillaume and Lemay Hébert, this volume).

As we focus on transversality instead of scales and on folds and entanglements instead of oppositions, the analysis moves from a more static spatial framework and linear temporalities to an emphasis on movement and the ephemeral. Guillaume and Huysmans (2019) deploy such analytics when they problematize the separation of a

"meaningful political order of things somewhere—in a United Nations or European Union office in Geneva or Brussels, and another everyday order of things elsewhere—in the living rooms or streets of either city." Politics becomes significant in the fuzziness of transversal spaces and visible in the fleeting practices that generate new possibilities of resistance. Nonlinearity in time is expressed in the duration of political repertoires of dissent, not in the continuity of linear succession of events (Guillaume and Huysmans 2019). To put it differently, once we let go of the oppositional and reactive conceptions of resistance, the problem becomes how to locate and position forces in specific situated struggles. As discussed above, the coherence of transnational social movements as agents of resistance often rests on the identification of a common "enemy" ' in global capitalism. Both sides of this relation lose consistency once the analysis focuses on the paths of entangled forces across levels. How are we, then, to identify and map the multiple points of resistance in a certain context if they are constantly shifting and unstable in their duration (also see Lisle, this volume)?

IPS research on migration again offers valuable insights into this problem. Migrants and refugees sit in an ambivalent place in world politics, in transit from a community no longer theirs toward unknown territories and suspended between a lost citizenship and a more or less distant future one. They live in a limit condition along the boundaries of the sovereign regime. As such, migrants are subjected to policies that aim to govern their precarious character by controlling their movements as well as their temporariness. Martina Tazzioli (2020) provides a compelling analysis of the technologies employed to divide and disperse migrants in order to manage them. She reflects on how what she calls "migrant multiplicities" produced in the process, "assemble together in a certain space, often building tactical alliances … constituting incipient collective subjects" (Tazzioli 2020: 18). So, migrants are always on the move, either because they are scattered away from border crossings by authorities or following their tactics of "spatial disobedience." Their flows vary in speed and ability to escape control, depending on how segmented they become in their trajectory. What is interesting is that migrants' practices of subversion and of transversal alliances with groups situated in different social and spatial contexts are formed as forces struggle on the move, accelerating or slowing down, but always folded in forms that cannot be separated along strict dyadic oppositional lines. Tazzioli points, precisely, to these "heterogeneous tactics of desubjugation" that "unsettle common collective subjectivities" and, as such, could hardly be examined under the power/resistance framework of analysis. Instead, what we find in IPS research are examinations of how acts of refusal, despite being always entangled in regimes of control, generate excesses that undo them. Papadopoulos, for instance, argues that migrants incorporate borders and trafficking as necessary to their tactics of escape, "digesting" them through "imperceptible excessive movements" (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos 2008: 191).

If borders and boundaries become part of a politics of transgression, we are faced with considerable difficulties in determining what exactly they are separating at a

certain place and time. In which case, we are forced to forfeit the clear-cut binaries of modern politics based on which sites, subjects, and objects of power and resistance are defined. We move away from opposition and toward encounters, or transgressions, in a similar vein as Ansems de Vries and Rosenow (2015) do when they argue in favor of "blurring the boundaries between binary categories" in order to think a politics of contestation beyond the limits of resistance (Ansems de Vries and Rosenow 2015). In this perspective, forces meet, disrupt, and converge in situated contexts in which the political outcome is always open and not determined by their contradictions. In other words, a key aspect in these dynamics of transgression lies in how encounters can be thought as the simultaneous capturing and differentiation of multiplicities, instead of the polarized clash of opposites in dialectical relation. We use the concept of the fold to articulate the way in which power struggles express variable intensities in the entanglement of differentiated forces. The fold, in a way, structures such relations transversally in a single plane in which they move and fold, producing ever-changing connections. In folds, forces are differentiated—and thus, express specific power relations—but are not separated, divided by lines into opposing individualities. It is in this sense that we suggest that they transgress in the movement of combinations through which they come to be organized as relatively stable relations that produce mutations, transformations, and (possibly) creation. If the limits of resistance lie in the reproductive character of oppositional struggles against domination, transgressive politics engages with the possibilities of "an infinite set of continuing and open-ended transformations and recreations" produced by "series of multiplicities that cannot be totalized" (Ansell-Pearson 1997: 183).

Conclusion: Transversal politics and the limits of resistance

Ever since its inception, IPS has been defined by its distinct effort to articulate a critique of dogmatic conceptualizations of the international as a site of political life. One of the key conceptual moves in IPS scholarship has been its exploration of the multiple challenges to borders and boundaries. Through this rearticulation of spaces, it became possible to research the circulation of a plurality of flows, relations, and connections previously subsumed by the gravitational force of sovereign lines. In this chapter, we have attempted to explore ways in which an IPS need not concern itself predominantly with how boundaries are produced, displaced, and multiplied in contemporary world politics. Our argument is, in fact, that resistance offers an opportunity for the field to explore pathways that allow it to move from an analytics of inside/outside to one of multiplicity, folds, and lines of movement. Moreover, we have also tried to show how a focus on practices of dissent in what we have called transgressive politics can correct the field's preference for themes and problems connected to technologies of government that often relegate resistance to a residual

place, limiting the possibilities of thinking and making change. Understanding the conditions of, and the processes through which, instituted repertoires of practice and the material conditions of life are actually changing is then the key analytical interest.

Introducing how IPS approaches resistance involves exploring a set of distinctive points of view that not only introduce a resistance-driven understanding of the social and political but also explore the limits of the category of resistance. The latter is the reason for us to speak of transgressive politics rather than resistance as the overarching term. Resistance captures the general disposition towards analyzing those practices and processes that politically disturb, disrupt, dispute, or rupture instituted repertoires of order and governance. Yet, its conception of these transgressions is not to be taken for granted. There are limits that arise from understanding transgressive politics through the concept of resistance. Two among these are particularly relevant for IPS: (i) the fragmentation of dissent, protest, and contention, raising questions for classical understandings of resistance that emphasize collective organization through sustained mobilization and (ii) the negativity of resistance—it always being defined in opposition to a given state of affairs—which hides the creativity that emerges in the intertwining of social and political practices.

The challenge transgressive political practices pose for IPS is not simply a matter of changing perspective by giving primacy to transgressive practices instead of focusing on practices and techniques of domination. It also invites IPS to develop concepts and methods that help us to understand the nature and processes of decentered transgressive practices and situations. In line with one of the founding claims of IPS that it is a project that interrogates the limits and seeks the transgression of classical dichotomies through which we think the international, political, and social, its study of transgressive politics needs to include pushing concepts of resistance to their limits and introducing alternative conceptions of transgressive politics. We introduced concepts like multiplicity and folds to that purpose. They are tools for IPS to escape from temptations of reasserting (i) a dialectical view of social change and (ii) the need for collective agency and subjectivity as the necessary conditions of critical politics within fractured situations.

Notes

1. For a more elaborate and historically situated understanding of how the concept of resistance has been tied to a logic of negativity, see Checchi (2021: 1–15).
2. Transgressive contentions, in the conceptualization of McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2004), differ from contained contentions in that at least one party is a new actor in a conflict and the contention includes innovative collective action.
3. The analyses of Ryan and Hage and similar analyses of resilience are reminiscent of earlier debates about everyday life, the concept of alienation, revolutionary emancipation, and class struggle (see Eley 1989; Vaneigem 1967; Lefebvre 2008).
4. Summit diplomacy refers to a practice of seeking to shape and deliver global or regional policy objectives through summit meetings between economic and political elites and heads of state (e.g. the G8, the World Summit on

Sustainable Development, summits on global debt regulation). Social movements and more fragmented activist actions are present at such summits to resist and shape global and regional policies.

5. For those interested in how these lines of thought can be formulated in an organizational theory of transgressive politics that simultaneously fractures resistance and retains elements of radical opposition, see Nunes (2021).

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CHAPTER 27

THE GAME OF EVERYDAY RESISTANCE

XAVIER GUILLAUME AND NICOLAS LEMAY-HÉBERT

INTRODUCTION

In Home Box Office's (HBO's) acclaimed TV series *The Wire* (Van Patten, Simon, and Burns 2002), which depicts US urban life through different aspects of Baltimore's citizens' everyday life, Omar D. Little is a stick-up man with a strict moral code, which leads him to target other criminals. Little mobilizes the metaphor of "the game" ("All in the game, yo, … all in the game") in a way that echoes but also disrupts one of the key drug kingpins in the city, Avon Barksdale's use of another game metaphor: "the game is the game." As has been noted by Paul Allen Andersen (2010: 384–392), both uses of the metaphor of "the game" serve different purposes. Each use reflects what everyday realities are for them in light of their position in "the game." Barksdale's is an authoritative statement that naturalizes his power and the hierarchies that are sustained by it and its violent enforcement; by making them part of a "fatalistic" depiction of a reality, he only follows the necessary logics of "the game." Little's "tautological proverb" echoes Barksdale's in its recognition that "indeed" there is a game but that he has chosen to play it differently. Little is "hardly a routine or predictable player" (Andersen 2010: 390) as his crimes are that of a trickster's (how could he be prosecuted for robbing criminals?) and his appropriation of "the game" sets him momentarily on its fringe, playing it but refusing to be determined by "it" as he is finally caught by "the game." Starting with these two players of "the game" of everyday urban criminal life—one ruling through and reproducing it, one re-appropriating and playing around it—is a way to establish the questions that lie at the heart of this chapter: how can we identify what "the game" (the everyday) is, and thus what constitutes "resistance" to it, when we have different players to "the game"?

As we will see through the case of peacebuilding operations in Haiti, what "the game" is; who its players are; and whether or not, and how, some players are resisting "the game" is a complex, confusing, and at times contradictory matter. Indeed, the idea of an "everyday resistance" brings together two of the most complex sociological phenomena to identify, which require clarity as to what is the political phenomena observed (Guillaume and Huysmans 2019), as they are both open to multiple

interpretations and projections. What is the everyday? What constitutes resistance? Both questions, which often overlap in the mind of students of everyday resistance, are further complexified by the need to specify what makes "everyday resistance" an international object of analysis (as opposed to any other "scale"), in order to participate to an *international* political sociology. In other words, to engage with an analysis of "everyday resistance" from the perspective of an international political sociology requires, first, an understanding of what is, or what does, an international political sociology for "everyday resistance." While we could spend time trying to understand what scholarly "games" are played around (an) international political sociology, we prefer to limit ourselves to a pragmatic stance: an international political sociology is a pluralistic problematization of the three interwoven but separate words, composing its denomination, which has to be read as an invitation to enquire about political questions with sociological tools in order to address the *problématique* of the international, that is the questioning of the "more than the local" (see Guillaume and Bilgin 2017).

The chapter first starts with discussing the challenges for an international political sociology to engage with everyday resistance as an object of study. Basing our argument on a brief discussion of questions pertaining to what the everyday is and, by extension, what everyday resistance could be, we establish the challenges and dangers behind romanticizing it or superimposing on it our horizons of expectation as students of the everyday and/or resistance. We then provide an empirical illustration of such shortcomings by discussing a series of recent events in Haiti, often deemed to represent a clear case of everyday resistance to globalized structures of power, to then resituate them with sociologically and historically complex dynamics that indicate the need to move beyond an either/or distinction when it comes to identifying what counts, or does not, as everyday resistance. We finish our discussion with a reflection, inspired by Ashis Nandy's notion of nonplayers, about what everyday resistance may mean when we come to think of a situation when someone does *not* play "the game." Far from providing any specific answers, this chapter is an invitation to clarify the sociological and political premises behind any analysis of "everyday resistance," whether they concentrate on its international lineages and configurations or not.

The challenges of everyday resistance from an international political sociology perspective

As noted, we embrace, with an international political sociology, the ability to forge questionings by engaging with its three interweaved terms: political questions, sociological tools, and the international. In that respect, what may, or may not, constitute everyday resistance, and even how to identify and analyze it, may be one of the most challenging for any international political sociology, whatever its intellectual lineages, precisely because of the indeterminacy that its "everydayness" bears on any analysis (G

uillaume and Huysmans 2019). To reflect on what constitutes everyday resistance, and how to analyze it from the perspective of an international political sociology is first to ask the question: What is "the everyday" as the "where" of resistance? With a recent assessment, we can conclude that there is a strong assumption in International Relations, and beyond, that "the everyday" speaks for itself or would be an obviously "distinct scale of reality (e.g. local), distinct sites (e.g. ordinary rather than elite), or particular practices (e.g. routine rather than disrupting)" (Guillaume and Huysmans 2019: 280). Paradoxically, in some analyses that tend to privilege the sociological as a nonreified space, we can see how the everyday is naturalized, whereas it should first be recognized for its indefinite, undetermined, and unfinalizable character (Guillaume and Huysmans 2019: 290–291). In other words, what constitutes the everyday and how to approach it is an analytical choice that needs empirical justification, conceptual clarity, and methodological robustness as the "everyday" is a sociological and political construct like any other; it is a specific "cut" in the complex fabric of reality.

Two scholars, with their own sensitivities, have come to emblematize the rich sociological traditions in the study of everyday resistance while foregrounding the complexity of the concepts: Michel de Certeau (1984 [1981]) and James C. Scott (1985). For both authors—albeit with different emphases—resistance is, first and foremost, an expression of the "weak"; any analysis of everyday resistance becoming meaningless without an account of the material structures of (re)production of inequalities. This discussion does not intend to reify in a few lines the nuanced contribution of both scholars, or of those who have been influenced by them. The aim is rather to briefly introduce their positions to readers who may not be familiar with them in order to make our overall point clearer.[1]

Starting with de Certeau, the everyday is constituted of "ways of operating" or doing things (de Certeau 1984 [1981]: xi), with each individual being the locus of an incoherent (and often contradictory) plurality of interaction between relational determinations. Hence, faced with this complexity, one has to make explicit the systems of operational combination that compose a "culture" in a given time. De Certeau further brings texture to the analysis by differentiating what he calls *strategy* from *tactics*. Strategy is the "calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated" (de Certeau 1984 [1981]: 35) and leads to the ability to shape situations structurally. Tactics, on the other hand, are "a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus" (de Certeau 1984 [1981]: 36), determined by the absence of power on the part of the "weak" to change the structures, "cultures," within which they are embedded (de Certeau 1984 [1981]: 38). Everyday resistance can thus be understood as an "*art* of the weak" (de Certeau 1984 [1981]: 37, our emphasis) to appropriate momentarily situations and spaces that are structured by strategies.

For James C. Scott, everyday resistance is rather the "*weapons* of the weak," used by subordinate classes to mitigate or deny the claims of superordinate classes made on them. For Scott (1985: xvi), focusing specifically on the peasantry, everyday resistance is hence "the prosaic but constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents and interest from them." These practices can take various forms, including foot-dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, or sabotage. Not unlike de Certeau's distinction between *strategy* and *tactics*, Scott sees a distinction between "institutionalised politics," which is formal, overt, concerned with systematic, de jure change, and "everyday resistance," which is informal, often covert, and concerned largely with immediate, de facto gains (Scott 1985: 33). As such, both scholars made pivotal contributions to the deconstruction of the binary between domination and resistance grounded in power relationships (de Certeau 1984 [1981]: 34) or institutionalized politics (Scott 1985: 33) to analyze everyday resistance in its plurality of forms or traces.

In both instances, resistance is deemed possible, even if it may not be immediately transformative of structures. Everyday resistance could then be analyzed both for its transformative potential, usually analyzed through more traditional political repertoires (from demonstrations to armed resistance) and for its more mundane aims or achievements. Yet, as Sherry B. Ortner (1995) (in a very important reflection) has highlighted, how we analyze whether resistance is thought as potentially transformative or not still runs the risk of what she terms the "ethnographic refusal," namely that studies of resistance are often at risk of three things: sanitizing politics, thinning culture, and dissolving actors. First, resistance is more than a "mechanical re-action" to domination (Ortner 1995: 177). There are inherent limitations to understanding resistance as an "everyday oppositional logic" (Johansson and Vinthagen 2020: 81–82). For Ortner, one has to look at internal politics (their *own* politics or politics *among* subalterns) as well as more institutionalized politics; if not, we may risk romanticizing resistance (e.g. Abu-Lughod 1990) and sanitizing the internal politics of the subalterns. Second, Ortner points to the risk of over-interpretating which aspect of culture a researcher may want to emphasize or deem crucial to the analysis of resistance. Cultural thinning is then expressed through the marginalization of actors or situations that do not fit neatly with the theoretical approach adopted by the researcher. Ortner (1995: 181), for instance, directly questions Scott's silence of religious actors in his analysis. Finally, Ortner blames some scholars for dissolving the subject, the individual, into a set of "subject's effects" that have virtually no coherence (Ortner 1995: 183). Here, one could see an implicit jab at de Certeau's often perceived lack of sociological depth and nuances in his analyses and the risk of making subjects only mechanically react to "structures."

As we can see, in trying to delimit what everyday resistance can be—between aims, weapons and mundane 'arts'—we are also confronted with the specific dangers of

projecting in resistance (Ortner 1995) or in the everyday (Guillaume and Huysmans 2019) more than what may be. With these warnings in mind, let's now turn to each term of (an) international political sociology and see what challenges we face as students of everyday resistance.

International

The term "international" is extremely laden, whether in terms of what the signifier refers to or the (disciplinary) relevance of what the signified may be (Kratochwil 2007). When it comes to the everyday, feminist scholarship in International Relations (IR) has long ago reminded us that the personal is the international, and the international is personal (Enloe 2014: 343–360). This reminder that the everyday *can* be connected to international economic, social, political dynamics and processes; that we are possibly embodying them one way or another; that our "local" is often embedded in the "global," is key to approaching the forms of domination and oppression, the global socio-political, legal, and economic dynamics that workers (Enloe 2014) or senior citizens (Holman and Walker 2020), to name but few evident categories, are facing on an everyday basis.

Far from being an evident " 'scale," "space," or "thing that has effect," the international, the everyday, and their relations are a specific social construct that is a tool for asking questions to our worlds, the forms of domination and oppression that may exist, and the ways in which people are facing them daily. As neither these terms nor their connection is either evident or natural, what an international political sociology of everyday resistance is first confronted with is the justification of the specific "cut" we do to our worlds in making them an object of research. Are we engaging with local resistance—and if so, by whom, towards what/whom, when, and where, etc.—to international social, political, economic, cultural, ideological dynamics or, rather, with situations that are influenced and shaped by international actors (from multinational companies to the United Nations) and how are some people navigating them? Are we asking questions about the forms resistance take, or whether we could consider certain mundane acts as resistance? In a nutshell then, the central (classical) challenge faced by (an) international political sociology of everyday resistance is simply the delimitation of its object of study: the who, when, what, how, where of an object that should be more than the local and thus determining, and delimiting, what is considered to be resistance (to whom, how, when, where, etc.), that is the kind of political questions we ask about "the everyday."

Political

Where is politics in the everyday? What is political about everyday resistance? These are the two key questions that (an) international political sociology of everyday resistance needs to answer. Naturally, there is no single answer to any of these

questions as politics and the political can have many definitions and focal points. However, and as we will see below, this identification participates in the determination and identification of what games are at play, by whom, when, where, etc. and how they constitute political acts, knowing that some may belong to the more classical repertoires of politics while others may be considered more ephemeral in their forms and achievements (Guillaume and Huysmans 2019). Knowing also that these "games" are in the plural and not exclusive of one another, they are enmeshed and often determine what repertoires or forms of contestation, or appropriation, are available to individuals and groups as well as their possible chances of success, however concrete or ephemeral (Foucault 1976: 121–135). To synthesize the point, the central challenge faced by (an) international political sociology of everyday resistance is the identification of what kind of political game*s* are at play within the defined object of study. How do we distinguish and connect the games that are structured around forms of domination from that of oppression? How do we engage with the intersectionality of factors contributing to the ability, or lack thereof, for individuals or groups to negotiate, contend with, challenge, or resist, and if so, in which forms, such games? How do we decide, and why do we decide (politically) to select, truncate, as is necessary in any analysis, our object of study to highlight who is enabled or disabled from being or doing in their everydayness? These are some of the political questions that would structure an international political sociology perspective.

Sociology

While sociological questions have already been raised in discussing the challenges behind questions pertaining to the "international" and the "political" when researching everyday resistance, the focus here should rather be on the awareness of the risk to transform a space and temporality of relations into an ideal of a space of emancipation: the everyday is resistance, resistance is the everyday. The everyday has been at the source of several social and sociological "myths" such as the "unity of the social, of [the everyday's] inexhaustible vitality and [of] ineradicable capacities for resistance and renewal" (Crook 1998: 537). In other words, in linking resistance to the everyday, and vice versa, the risk is to become unreflective and, in a sense (to paraphrase Ortner) to enact a "sociological refusal" of the actual relations of individuals and groups to forms of domination and oppression; how the everyday is the space and temporality within which they negotiate and accommodate, accept and reject, all at the same time, often in ways that seem contradictory, structures of domination and modalities of oppression. In other words, an international political sociology of everyday resistance should be cautious not to reduce its sociology to an unquestionable, unproblematized, and inherent locus of resistance to global(ized) phenomena of domination and injustice. To restate, our point is not to deny that these forms of resistance, in all their complexities, do not exist—quite the contrary! Rather, our point lies elsewhere. It is the

task of an international political sociology—whatever its intellectual heritage—to explain what its sociology of the game is, and the players of the game are, and outline the structure of opportunities and forms of evidence that coalesce into making the case for identifying and evidencing if and how everyday resistance is at work. We now turn to a concrete example of the tensions that arise from these challenges.

Scale: Everyday peacebuilding and resistance

The "everyday" in the peacebuilding literature is commonly understood as a scale, where the everyday is located "in the field," "on the ground," or in a "bottom-up" perspective (Autesserre 2014: 29; Kullenberg 2019: 124; Lemay-Hébert 2011, 2013; Mac Ginty 2021). Through this move, the everyday is hence inherently tied to resistance (Mac Ginty 2014: 551), primarily as forms of noncompliance from local actors (Mac Ginty 2011: 6) in peacebuilding processes seen as imposed on them from exogenous forces. In general, the analytical move intended here has been to reverse the traditional focus on elite to focus instead on "quotidian actors." Hence, if one asks what "doing the everyday" (Guillaume and Huysmans 2019: 279) means for most of the (critical) literature on peacebuilding, the answer is that it would generally serve the dual purpose of understanding how international interventions reproduce specific practices, habits, and social frames (Kullenberg 2019), as well as analyzing how local societies shape and oppose these practices, habits, and social frames with multiple strategies (Lemay-Hébert 2014; Mac Ginty 2011). By extension, the use of the everyday in the peacebuilding literature remains primarily compartmentalized to a superimposed expectation of the nature of the games played. This expectation is largely a scaled-down version of a traditional conceptualization of resistance as a disruption of the rules of the game, rather than, as we will see further down, as an avoidance of such rules by not playing them.

In contradistinction to this, one could say that the encounter between the global and the local makes the global (Guillaume and Huysmans 2019: 283), and this is more in line with the literature striving to provide a more nuanced, nonbinary account of everyday resistance (Iñiguez de Heredia 2017; Johansson and Vinthagen 2020). For instance, in Haiti, sexual abuse scandals perpetrated by United Nations (UN) peacekeepers and other officials affiliated with humanitarian organizations have been commonplace over the years (Lemay-Hébert 2014: 205–206), becoming a common item of news cycles and discussions in Haiti. While the scandals surrounding Oxfam and the orgies organized by staffers have shocked the world (notably because some sex workers may have been underage), the reality is that no one in Haiti was really surprised by these revelations (Daniels 2018). These events can be understood as encounters of the global and the local but also as enactments of daily practices, relations, and entanglements permeating the everyday life in Haiti, a country suffering from, in many respects, "too much governance" (Kivland 2012: 250). The extraordinary governance of

the international gives place to a study of ordinary connections and relations, from the places where actors mingle and meet (in the case of Haiti, the affluent neighborhood of Pétionville or specific hotels in the downtown area) to a concern about how the many peacekeepers-fathered children have to navigate complex racial politics in their home towns (Lee and Bartels 2020). These "international" encounters color daily interactions, creating new entanglements. To give but one example, Jordanian soldiers have been accused of stealing and sexually abusing a farmer's goat in Haiti. While this action has not been proven (or even properly investigated), it has been the source of many discussions in Haiti. Peacekeepers, for instance, are generally and persistently described as "goat thieves" (Vahedi et al. 2021), mocking them regularly to the point where goat bleating and chants of *vole kabrit* ("goat thieves") became "symbols in antitroop street protests" (Frerichs 2016: 29; Smith 2011).

The "everyday" as a scale and "resistance" as a position or tactic come naturally together in the critical analysis of international interventions. Researchers interested in the everyday tend to have a tendency to read all occurrences around them as natural resistance to "top-down" politics, seeing "authentic" resistance to reviled "liberal" policies. In this sense, any "everyday" act becomes politicized, read through the specific lens of resistance, or lack thereof, and is understood as a means to score a political point. Graffiti, for instance, instantaneously becomes synonymous with contentious political participation and an emanation of "bottom-up" concerns and needs (Tellidis 2020), even though we know full well, at least in the context of Haiti, that many pieces of street art that have a political connotation are "commissioned" by political actors. Since the end of the Duvalier era, graffiti in Haiti has been a "political instrument" used "against the ones whose head one wanted to cut off" (Ulysse 2016; our translation), or alternatively to glorify the sponsor of the graffiti. As such, many walls of Port-au-Prince's busy streets are covered with the Kreyòl *aba* ("stop with") or *viv* ("long live") followed by the main protagonists of the time: hopefuls looking for electoral endorsement, representatives of the elite attacked for corruption or misuse of power, or even international actors targeted for their poor track record in the country. As such, walls are used by all sectors of society to pass a variety of messages and are the space par excellence of all revendications as well as "of all arbitrariness, lies and half-truths" (Ulysse 2016; our translation). A relatively small number of young men are behind these street arts, selling "their services to politicians, powerbrokers, and anyone with a grudge or something to profess" (Norton 2018: 107). It does not mean that there is no space for artistic and politically engaged graffiti in Haiti—this form of art has certainly blossomed as a form of contestation to the increasing international presence in Haiti (Norton 2018; Ulysse 2016). It simply means that street art as resistance can be overshadowed by the more prosaic political use of the streets in Haitian politics.

The point is not to cynically look at aspects of everyday resistance in Haiti, but to try to address the issue of "pushing resistance to its limits" in a context of taking the decentering agenda of (an) international political sociology seriously (Huysmans and N

ogueira, this volume). We raise as an analytical point the necessity of contextualizing what mobilizing these two concepts—everyday and resistance—together does and when their pairing requires more than simply connecting two "positive" imaginaries (Guillaume 2011). The politics of demonstrations in Haiti provides another illustration of how the encounters between the global and the local, as an everyday encounter of power and resistance, invites a much more complex and nuanced analysis as to what "everyday resistance" may mean. The 2003–2004 demonstrations against Aristide and, after Aristide's forced exile, against the transitional government are a case in point. These demonstrations need to be understood as part of a "political space in mutation" marked by the growing presence of international actors in Haiti (Therme 2014: 128). This overwhelming and invasive international presence shaped the space of political dissent in many ways, especially through the mapping of the spaces of everyday encounters and insecurities between expats and Haitians in Port-au-Prince (Lemay-Hébert 2018).

Since the late 1990s, but especially during the 2003–2004 demonstrations, most of Port-au-Prince, including the downtown area, came to be seen a space of insecurity by and for expats as demonstrators, largely originating from the poorer districts of Bel Air and Saint-Martin, would regularly come to the Champs de Mars—a major public park in the downtown of Port-au-Prince—to demonstrate in front of physical representations of Haitian institutions of power, such as the presidential palace. The formal cartography of security zones by international actors mapped to the spaces that were believed to be the Haitians' everyday practices of resistance to institutions of power (Lemay-Hébert 2018). In 2010, after the earthquake, the key sites of demonstration shifted to Pétionville, while the expat security maps remained fixated on the Champs de Mars.

Shifting geographies of power and resistance in Haiti, exemplified by these security maps, can be read as a straightforward story of Haitian's reaction and resistance to local and international structures of power. Yet, it is important to think about them against two specific backdrops. First, while these various demonstrations can, indeed, be seen as expressions of political discontent—"surgissements populaires" ("popular upsurging") to use Pierre Therme's words (2014), or even as "plebeian interpellations" (Corten, Huart, and Peñafiel 2012), representative of an alternative order where demonstrators are autonomous and sovereign—they also cannot be set fully outside the local political clout and economic wherewithal of Haitian political actors and, in certain cases, their international backers. This is true, notably, for the Lavalas political party. The Lavalas party played a prominent role in channeling the "spontaneous revolts" into a partisan contestation after Aristide's exile (Therme 2014), even if it progressively lost steam in a shifting political landscape occupied by new political actors (especially the Haitian Tèt Kale Party after the botched elections of 2010–2011). The co-optation of demonstrations from a mix of local and international actors—by the local bourgeoisie and international actors in 2003–2004 demonstrations in particular—renders social and political questions in Haiti more difficult to analyze as straightforward events of everyday resistance.

Second, events in 2003–2004 and 2010 are a cautionary tales for researchers (including the authors of this chapter) of their readiness to unwittingly romanticize what everyday resistance to local and international actors looks like. How does one reconcile, on the one hand, the actions taken by Haitians against different local and international sites of power with, on the other hand, the "commissioned" nature of at least some of these actions as well as other indicators troubling any straightforward reading of "everyday resistance"? What is the "game" that is being played? Who are its players and counter-players (those resisting it)? To what extent do we need to include "everyday collaboration" ' as a sister category of action to "everyday resistance" (Ortner 1995: 176)? For instance, how does one make sense, from an "everyday-resistance" perspective, of Haitians clapping and cheering when US helicopters landed near the destroyed presidential palace after the 2010 earthquake? Many observers rather conveniently interpreted this as an act of "false consciousness," whilst others argued that it was a demonstration of public support for foreign oversight (Katz 2013: 150) or part of the mixed support to the UN mission in Haiti in its final days (King et al. 2021). As we argue in the next section, to have a more nuanced understanding of what everyday resistance entails and how it may not be such a straightforward story in the Haitian context, we need to approach what the "game" actually is and how, historically and contextually, the "game" is played in Haiti.

Game: Marronage and practices of subterfuge in Haiti

As we noted above, to better understand what "everyday resistance" entails and the different, apparently contradictory, forms it takes, we need to offer a contextualization of the possible games that are at play and how they may be played. In Haiti, "practices of subterfuge," commonly known as "marronage" (*mawonaj* in Haitian Kreyòl), or *flight*, are a central historical feature in the politics of the island, and one could say a central feature of slavery itself (Daniels 2012: 122). The practices, some of which are in direct lineage with those observed by Scott in Malaysia (1985), refer to the practice of ex-slaves, before the independence of the country in 1804, who composed Haiti's rural base and who could not easily be compelled into a new servitude in Haitian plantations. *Petit*—implying deserting the plantation temporarily—or *grand* marronage —referring to the attempt to leave the plantation for good—are identified as beginning at the end of the seventeenth century, continuing throughout the colonial period (Lundahl 1979: 320). Originally, the *marrons* in Saint-Domingue—a heterogeneous group of individuals comprising African slaves, enslaved *creoles*, and possibly some free people of color (Daniels 2012: 122)—established sanctuary areas in the mountains and forest, living off brigandage (Heinl and Heinl 2005: 25).

Marronage was "resistance through elusiveness" (Maguire 1996: 3). There were a few open confrontations with authority throughout the colonial years, and if they

happened, such outbreaks of violence were not typical.[2] Marronage came to embody a general form of escape from abuses of power rather than a collective confrontation against despotism (Fatton Jr 2007: 2). It was not a full-frontal assault on the structures of slave society as some would dream it, neither was it a fully fledged strategy of emancipation and independence (Fatton Jr 2007: 29). The trademark of marronage is to flee from oppression (Trouillot 1977: 75), and *marrons* leaders were frequently willing to accept amnesty on the condition that they would not further disturb the colonial system (Nicholls 1979: 24). Furthermore, it seems more plausible to assert that most fugitives were concerned with individual freedom rather than bringing about the collapse of plantation slavery (Daniels 2012: 131–133). This specific game of "resistance through elusiveness" as a way to counteract overwhelming power structures is not particular to Haiti; it is played everywhere power relations are present—from Afro-Americans navigating repressive police presence in the United States (Fox-Williams 2018) to migrants in Europe or elsewhere having to deal with the possibility of detention and forced return as well as the threats posed by far-right groups (Papatzani 2021).

The concept of marronage also carries the understanding of deceit or hiding the truth, with ramifications extending to fieldwork and "data-gathering strategies" as employed by researchers "accessing" Haiti (or other similar locales). It is the traditional peasant practice in Haiti of maintaining a low profile and avoiding being noticed (White and Smucker 1998: 2), displaying an absence of trust in people outside of the community. In general, it can be considered as a form of "deceit of the lowers" misleading the powerful (Chambers 1997: 84). Maronnage in this form would happen regularly to researchers trying to access Haiti, with ordinary Haitians (*pèp la* in Haitian Kreyòl) navigating questions in order to avoid finding themselves in difficult positions. As we will see below, this reflects the point that Nandy makes about colonialism—that if the colonizer knows their own *répertoire*, the colonized has a distinct advantage as they know both their own *répertoire* and the colonizer's (Nandy 2009 [1983]: xv–xvi). "Authenticity" is negotiated, and it is the "ordinary citizen" who is imposing the rules of this specific game, even if they are on the receiving end of the broader game constituted by existing power structures around them.

Whilst they have normally nothing positive to expect from these overarching power structures—only extraction and violence can come from most interactions—ordinary people develop a register of practices to elude and escape. In such a context, and to come back to the first idea, ordinary people are quite adept at understanding what the interviewer wants and giving exactly what they require from the interaction (if the cost of doing so is not prohibitive). Whilst pretending to play the game, most interviewees would become nonplayers, moving beyond the game in ways that might not be captured and understood by the unaware researcher. This is a theme that has been explored at length in the field of anthropology (e.g. Barley 1984). Recognizing the socially constructed nature of the notion of the everyday in this context would enable one to start

grappling with the constraints of how the researcher's horizon of expectation shapes the analytical object at stake (Guillaume and Huysmans 2019: 280) and what methodological measures should be implemented to move away from reified notions of authenticity or the actors' assessments of their intent (Weitz 2001: 679) to grapple with the decentering of international and political life.

From the example of marronage, we can see the challenges behind establishing clearly a specific object of study by identifying what the game is, who the players are, what the rules are, outside of what a researcher's horizon of expectation is, outside of the idealized ascription of what everyday resistance is. In a sense, these challenges are methodological ones and ultimately are met by offering an explicit articulation of one's own analytical, normative, and empirical premises and operationalization (see: Guillaume and Huysmans 2019). They are also met by not refusing the sociological and political complexities that may invite us to draw more nuanced depictions of situations that are not as straightforwardly forms of resistance as the players themselves may not be necessarily playing "that" game. With this in mind, we would like to put forth a further challenge. This challenge is to think a little bit further, with Nandy, on what type of players do actually bring transformation in certain situations of domination and oppression.

Challenging dichotomies: Ashis Nandy's notion of nonplayers

Unlike Scott, who sees the potential of everyday resistance as an individualized game that, in its incremental, selfish, and unwitting play, can bring a change in the game, and unlike de Certeau, for whom everyday resistance is a fleeting and momentaneous re-appropriative play that has no consequences on the game that is played, Nandy offers a different optic about the game itself and the necessity for it to be played in order to be changed. Nandy's notion of nonplayers is a particular challenge for an international political sociology of everyday resistance precisely because it invites us to rethink, almost as a limit case, how and what type of relations of power are at work when we think about resistance from that perspective. As we have seen in the case of Haiti, there are strong implicit expectations at work when thinking about who are the actors of resistance and their sociological and political dynamics vis-à-vis the powerful, the elites, and the international. Nandy invites us to further think how resistance may also be a form of reproduction of power and domination, and how if the manners by which we play may bring about transformation, then the best tactic may be not to play at all.

Our starting point rests with Nandy's understanding of colonialism—this "indigenous process released by external forces" (see, for instance, Nandy 2009 [1983]: 3, 11, 24–25, 52)—which is understood as an internal process of alienation provoked by a violent encounter with an *other* (see also Fanon 1952). This encounter produces sociological and political dynamics that are not only cementing dominant categories discourse and

practices in both colonizing and colonized societies but also fixing the ability to retrieve and reinvent their alternative (Foucault 1976: 121–135). In other words, colonialism is setting the terms of the game by which what counts as properly and "authentically" political is understood and negotiated. Nandy further asserts that a particularity of colonialism is its ability to manage dissent by setting the limits within which this dissent will take place and be recognized as such. In many ways, the individuals, groups, and institutions that are seen as resisting the colonial codes of domination actually are, more often than not, reproducing these codes; codes that have emerged through the interactions between colonizers and colonized (Nandy 2009 [1983]: 2). This is echoing what we have described above, which shows how the expectations of what everyday resistance is somehow trumps the complexities and ambiguities of certain actions or events. Their political relevance of what is seen as resistance is structured by the premises of a dichotomized understanding of the local versus the international, the mundane versus the exceptional, the people versus the elites, etc. What is read in Haiti's context is as much about what actually happened than how the expected behaviors and repertoires of resistance are as they stem from the horizon of expectations of the researcher (something we can clearly see in analyses of silence as resistance, see Guillaume 2018).

The central challenge offered by Nandy is to move away from a certain romanticism about events and people that we summon as being part of an everyday resistance to identify them as the counter-players of the game of coloniality. Counter-players, while opposing coloniality, possess repertoires of dissent and contestation that are structured by their interactions with the colonizing forces. They are shaped by the forms of domination that may be produced and reproduced by such interactions, whether they are in terms of class, gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, religious or ideological beliefs, culture, disabilities, and so on. These structures and forms of domination are setting the dichotomized codes that are *shared*, in Nandy's view, by the colonizers and the colonized, or in the case of Haiti, by common people or the voiceless (*pèp la*), on the one hand, and the elite, on the other. Counter-players, while offering resistance to structures of domination, or forms of oppression, are also constitutive of them *to the extent* that they contribute to the perpetuation of these structures, even though they may successfully get rid of certain forms of oppression. This forms the heart of Nandy's critique of Indian nationalism (e.g. Nandy, 2009 [1983]: 70–80), which, while it indeed freed India from colonial rule, nonetheless reproduced colonial modalities and violence, notably by creating "Others" not deemed authentically "Indian," whether in terms of their religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality.

Counter-players are not only accepting the rules of the game but also the game itself as it has been set by the colonizing forces. This is not a straightforward or even conscious acceptance, neither is it a simple imposition or acquiescence; the literature on colonialism has long demonstrated the complexity of these relations (e.g. Thomas 1994). The counter-player is not a clone of the player, but their resistance is the result of

the negotiating process at the core of colonialism. The fact that counter-players are drawing on repertoires of contestation, categories of mobilization, modes of action, and understandings of what politics is that are the result of this negotiation is a challenge for an international political sociology, as we have seen in the case of Haiti. This challenge can be formulated as such: How can we think sociologically and politically about the everyday and resistance when some practices we associate with their combined emancipatory, transformative, and/or even appropriative potentials may actually reproduce the dichotomized structure of the "game"? Are relations of power between players and counter-players a space of reproduction with only marginal shifts (changes) that modify some of the rules about how the game is played but not the game itself (transformation)?

Again, the point is not to deny the existence of everyday resistance in the world; nor the plight of those who suffer daily from the many structures of domination and forms of oppression; nor how resistance takes place against them and, at times, leads to change. Rather, the point is to ask difficult political and sociological questions, which have conceptual and methodological consequences. For this reason, we would like to continue exploring the third figure Nandy is offering to our consideration, that of the nonplayer, those who may be playing "another game, refusing to be either a player or a counter-player" (Nandy 2007 [1987]: 34). According to Nandy, nonplayers exert a form of resistance that refuses to use the colonizing terms of dualistic and dilemmatic opposition. In other words, for the nonplayer, the game is not about either/or: democracy *or* autocracy, secularism *or* religiousness, tradition *or* modernity, liberalism *or* illiberalism, etc. Nonplayers are often seen negatively by players and counter-players alike, shedding light on how the political positions of nonplayers, outside of strictly dichotomized ones, are a mirror to the dilemmatic, and possibly dead-end dynamics predominating. This focus on dilemmatic dichotomies may be worth exploring more as we have the opportunity to bring to an international political sociology a decolonial invitation.

Nandy's engagement with Western/colonizing forms of dilemmatic politics and sociology is related to his mobilization of the Mādhyamakā school in Buddhist philosophy and Nāgārjuna's thought in particular (see Nandy 2009 [1983]: 73, 77; on the Mādhyamakā school and Nāgārjuna, see Bugault 1994). The Mādhyamakā school and Nāgārjuna can be seen as a philosophical counterpoint to dilemmatic thinking, which permeates most of the dominant Western philosophical tradition. This form of thinking can be traced back in this tradition (and with it, its political effects) to Aristotle's principle that "It is impossible for the same attribute at once to belong and not to belong to the same thing [Bugault's trans. 'subject'] and in the same relation" (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*: Book 4 1005b; Bugault 1994: 239) and its corollary that "it is impossible at once to be and not to be" (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*: Book 2 996b). As noted by Guy Bugault in his discussion of the comparison between Aristotle and Nāgārjuna, this principle "is a norm indivisibly logical, ontological and

anthropological. It is the logical shortcut of an ontology, the latter being the metaphysics of the πολιτικὸν ζῷον [politikon zoon], the man living in the city" (Bugault 1994: 248).

It is precisely at this juncture that Nandy criticizes players and counter-players in what he sees as their unwillingness, or rather inability, to surrender to forms of indeterminacy.[3] In other words, the colonizing dilemma representative of a certain dominant Western modernity, at the heart of Western colonizing forces—keeping in mind that modernity and some of its core associated concepts, such as secularism, are to be read in the plural and not just as purely Western (Asad 2005)—and its sociological and political effects have somehow less to do with how we act in the world than how we are excluding the possibility of the indeterminate through their conjunction *as a dilemma*; that is, both cannot be true at the same time, neither can they be untrue at the same time. Nandy, for instance, locates this dilemmatic determinacy in the Western, and subsequent non-Western (in the specific case of India) rejection of androgyny in the dilemmatic determinacy between masculinity and feminine or in the abandonment of the "rationality that turns [the oppressor/the oppressed] into co-victims" (Nandy 2009 [1983]: 99).[4] We are facing here the challenge of identifying and researching not only who a nonplayer could be and what effect they may have, if any, but also of considering how we can research how the "game" is played beyond a dichotomized reading between players and counter-players.

Conclusion

If the "game" generally reflects everyday realities based on the actors' position in the game, as we posited at the start of this chapter, then the question becomes to what extent the "game" encapsulates all social phenomena occurring in front of us. As discussed previously, there is a fatalism or determinism in Avon Barksdale's approach to the "game" (Anderson 2010); as actors are engulfed in the "game," no one can escape its powerful entropy. However, if one can play the game differently, in the footsteps of Omar Little, then the question can also be extended as to whether (and, if so, how) anyone can simply possibly decline to play the "game" and, if a counter-player, simply reproduce it. This echoes the fruitful conceptualization of Nandy's nonplayer, who resists the "game" as it is played, by players and counter-players alike, by nonplaying it. Here, resistance is not geared toward change, or appropriations like Omar Little's, but transformation by rejecting altogether any rules or expectations set by the game. It is asking an international political sociology of everyday resistance some hard questions: whether what *seems* to be indifference or accommodation is not resistance (and, if so, how) and whether what is usually considered as resistance may also contain reproduction and domination in it. In other words, how can we methodologically and analytically engage with the pluralities of the "game" without ourselves reproducing it?

Beyond the dynamics of power and its concomitant resistance—the player and the counter-player, who are monopolizing the "foreground" of the landscape of everyday resistance (Scott 1985: 49)—may lie a more complex reality. By bringing in practices of everyday resistance such as elusiveness, as discussed through the practices of Haitian marronage, we offer an invitation to acknowledge the limits to our understandings of the complex dynamics at play. It is also a recognition that any "game" unfolding is constantly interfered by external presence (including, obviously, the spectator). Following Ortner, we question the limit of seeing everything as authentic everyday resistance practices *contra* international oppression and domination, wondering if "everyday collaboration" or "accommodation" as an adjacent category of action should not also be taken more seriously. This allows us to return to one of the questions asked in the prelude of this chapter: what could an international political sociology of "everyday resistance" be, and what does it actually do for those studying it? Through a review of the literature on contemporary peacebuilding, one could posit, without trying to be polemical, that studies of the everyday have traditionally served as a foil to highlight the pitfalls of exogenous interventions. Everyday resistance is associated with a "local," "plebeian," "authentic," or "traditional" space interacting with exogenous forces imposed on these actors. While such approaches present the benefit of clarifying complex situations, they also may oversimplify the "game" that the actors play, to the extent that these actors may not be able to recognize themselves in these depictions.

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Notes

1. Anna Johansson and Stellan Vinthagen (2020) provide a useful synthesis of the broader literature on everyday resistance.
2. The notable exception is, of course, the Haitian revolution of 1791–1804.
3. It is important here to be cautious about our use of the term "indeterminacy." With all the precautions that are required in such analogy, and bearing in mind how Buddhism has been, and still is, historically and philosophically fantasized in the West (Droit 1997) and beyond, we believe that the idea of indeterminacy transcribes here best Nandy's decentering of the onto-epistemic pregnancy of a hegemonic understanding of modernity and its practical effects from a political standpoint.
4. While we welcome his challenge, Nandy also possesses his own recurrent essentialism vis-à-vis some identities, notably his own romanticizing of the Indian rural population (see, for instance, Nandy 2009 [1983]: 27, 102, 104, 107–108, 111).

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CHAPTER 28

ECOLOGICAL RESISTANCE

HÅKAN THÖRN

Introduction: Rue Voltaire, Paris 2015

In official discourses on climate change, the Paris Agreement has gone down as a milestone in global climate politics. The significance of the agreement was framed in such a way from the outset, on December 12, 2015, the day it was finalized and presented to the world in a press release published by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC 2015):

> An historic agreement to combat climate change and unleash actions and investment toward a low carbon, resilient and sustainable future was agreed by 195 nations in Paris today. The Paris Agreement for the first time brings all nations into a common cause based on their historic, current and future responsibilities.

With regard to climate activism and ecological resistance, the significant meetings that took place in Paris in 2015 were not those held in the premises of the official Conference of the Parties (COP) but those that occurred in other parts of Paris, in the Village Mondial des Alternatives and the Climate Action Zone (ZAC); and in the streets of Paris, where various actions, such as the climate strike on November 30, resisted the ban on public gatherings following the French government's declaration of a state of emergency, following the November terrorist attack. Two strategic meetings, dubbed "Beyond Paris," were particularly decisive. In a big room located in a building at 21 Rue Voltaire, more than 150 activists, representing networks, action groups, and movement organizations from every continent, had assembled. A heated debate raged over whether there was a future for the highly heterogenous global climate movement that, since the first COP meeting in Berlin in 1995, had gathered every year to push world leaders to engage in radical political action to fight climate change. And if the movement was to be sustained on a global level, what path should it take? The atmosphere in the room was tense, the future of the climate movement, and consequently (so the activists in the room believed) of the planet, was at stake. Considering that strong arguments had been made for pluralism in resistance methods and political

minimalism in ideological content, could there be anything left to agree upon? One activist argued that in terms of people, the movement had a desperate need to find methods to scale up, and that this meant the movement had to scale down in terms of space, focusing on acts of local resistance that targeted the fossil fuel industry. While this would mean leaving the obsession with summit protests behind, the movement would still be global, as local resistance would be coordinated as translocal civil disobedience campaigns, in which activists would strike simultaneously in different locations across continents. Eventually, many in the room agreed.

Scholars have argued that the climate justice movement has continued to question the focus on summit protests (de Moor 2018), becoming increasingly multi-scalar and polycentric (Tormos-Aponte and García-López 2018) and focusing on decentralized actions and organizing (de Moor 2021a). The picture/vision painted at the Paris meeting came true four years later when environmental mass action was staged in the streets of cities across the world and yet globally coordinated. The 2019 global climate strike in September occurred at 4,500 locations in 150 countries, with approximately 6 million people participating (de Moor et al. 2020). Extinction Rebellion (XR) staged civil disobedience actions in over thirty countries (Smiles and Edwards 2021), while Ende Gelände struck against a coal plant in one of the largest direct actions in the climate movement's history. In Sweden, anti-extraction protests involving the Sami people were part of a trans-local struggle that linked Indigenous struggles across all continents around the world (Cassegård and Thörn 2022). Importantly, these events were fueled by an unpredictable development: the sudden formation of a new political generation. Nevertheless, it was clear that these very young activists were building on the experiences of previous generations of ecological activists.

Historically, ecological resistance has its roots in the early 1970s in connection with the emergence of an environmental movement that was part of the movement culture of the "new social movements" (e.g. Melucci 1989; Touraine 1981). Articulating an anti-systemic critique of consumer capitalism and an action repertoire centering on symbolic yet concrete civil disobedience acts, ecological resistance represented a radical break in relation to the earlier nature conservation movement. It was *ecological* resistance because (different from nature conservation) it involved a systemic perspective on nature as well as the relation between nature and society, implying that systemic change was needed to address environmental destruction. It was ecological *resistance* because (again, different from the politics of nature conservation) it involved an emphasis on transgressive strategies and/or tactics.

In a discussion of collective acts of resistance, Foucault (1982: 211) argued that they are "immediate" in the sense that they target the *direct effects* of power:

> In such struggles people criticize instances of power which are the closest to them, those which exercise their action on individuals. They do not look for the "chief enemy," but for the "immediate enemy." Nor do they expect to find a solution to their problem at a future date (that is, liberations, revolutions, end of class struggle).

Ecological *resistance* is immediate in its emphasis on direct action against the activities and physical presence of governments and corporations: interrupting climate summits perceived to sustain environmental destruction rather than addressing it, blocking nuclear and coal plants, sabotaging oil or gas pipelines. These actions are calling for an immediate stop to environmentally destructive activities, demanding change NOW. However, *ecological* resistance is also anti-systemic, meaning that the emphasis on the immediate is linked to a utopian imagination, the possibility of a future large-scale social transformation. Thus, while an important dimension of ecological resistance is captured by Foucault's conceptualization, there is also a need to move beyond the limits of his approach along the lines suggested in this volume by Huysmans and Nogueira, for whom resistance not only refers to "movements, events and processes that challenge a given order" but also involves "the aim of rupturing an existing order so a 'better' social formation can be created." This chapter contributes to the development of the concept of resistance in this direction by integrating it with certain strands of social movement theory.

Since the turn of the millennium, we have seen a shift in ecological resistance, something that needs to be understood in relation to two developments. First, fueled by neoliberal ideology, a new phase of global capitalism has arrived with an economization of nature. Second, climate change has been established as the dominant environmental issue worldwide. This chapter aims to capture and analyze the new forms of resistance brought by these shifts. Changing realities in collective action require novel theoretical syntheses. I argue that these changes call for a discussion about the relation between ecological resistance, environmental social movement formation, and revolutionary transformation. While the study of resistance, social movements, and revolutions has largely developed into separate fields, addressing collective action and social change from different angles, recent developments in the world of protest have encouraged scholars to engage in attempts to produce new theoretical syntheses (e.g. Lawson 2019; Törnberg 2021). As a contribution to this development, I present a theoretical approach that integrates elements from governmentality theory, (post-)Marxism, social movement theory, and resistance studies. I argue that the new forms of collective activism call for a reformulation of concepts such as "resistance," "social movement," "global civil society," and "government."

Global civil society as a space for ecological resistance

Since the establishment of ecological discourse worldwide in the 1960s, revealing how environmental destruction ultimately damaged a *planetary* system, environmental politics, whether institutionalized or in the shape of local resistance, has always involved a global dimension. The complexity of the global ecological regimes that began to be established in the wake of the UN conference in Stockholm in 1972 may, at first sight, appear as neatly conceptualized in terms of privileged cases of "global governance," a concept that defined a new research field established in international politics around the turn of the millennium (e.g. Held and McGrew 2002; Held and Koenig-Archiburgi 2005).

My starting point is, however, the critical approach to International Relations (IR) that has pointed out how global governance studies pay little or no attention to relationships of power (e.g. Barnett and Duvall 2005; Thörn 2016). Further, I draw on a critical body of literature arguing that the discourses and policies of "good governance" and their emphasis on "partnerships" between states, international bodies, civil society, business associations, and corporations involve a process of *de-politicization* (Swyngedouw 2014; Jaeger 2007; Chatterton, Featherstone, and Routledge 2012; Thörn 2016). This critical literature has often tended to overlook, or underemphasize, the fact that processes of de-politicization, in the context of global governance structures, have been countered by collective resistance. In the context of environmental politics, de-politicization has been counteracted by activists using a rich repertoire of resistance. I argue that because of the globality of these struggles, including their performance as resistance to local power regimes, they need to be understood in the context of global civil society, given that this concept is understood differently from its mainstream definition.

As argued by Chandhoke (2002), Calhoun (2002), and others, much of the rather Eurocentric literature on global civil society conceptualizes this political space as largely defined by the dispersion of the discourse of human rights and the norms and values of (Western) democracy across the globe. I would add that mainstream conceptions of global society also imagine it as a relatively homogenous space that mainly serves the function of creating social integration across national boundaries. Further, it has also been demonstrated how dominant states in the Global North exercise power through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the context of an emphasis on "civil society" in global development politics. This development began in the mid-1990s under the leadership of the World Bank, through what Davis (2006) has called "soft imperialism." Sending and Neumann (2006) have argued that civil society organizations (CSOs) in "developing countries" have become both objects of government and self-governing subjects, performing certain government tasks in civil society. In the context of environmental politics, these developments have been

examined, for example, in critical analyses of the Green Climate Fund (Bertilsson 2022; Bertilsson and Thörn 2021; Bracking 2015).

Moreover, conflicts also exist *within* civil society, for example between "big green" environmental organizations that have promoted various projects to implement market mechanisms (see further below) and those that have engaged in resistance to such projects. In order to capture these dynamics, the neo-Gramscian tradition offers a perspective that views civil society as a space of struggle and conflict. This view has been extended beyond the national context by Robert W. Cox (1999), who refers to "global civil society" in order to analyze global political spaces in which not only nation-states but also a much wider range of actors are engaged in struggles over global hegemony, meaning the legitimacy of contemporary global power structures. Drawing on this approach, I define global civil society as a political space in which a diversity of political experiences, action strategies, identities, values, and norms are articulated and contested; a space of struggle and conflict—over the values, norms, and rules that govern global social space(s)—and ultimately over the control of material resources and institutions (Thörn 2007, 2009).

The heterogenous actors that constitute the global climate movement have often grouped themselves along the lines of a division of nation-states associated with the Global North/South divide (or, in UNFCCC lingo, Annex 1–2 countries and Least Developed Countries, respectively). However, as social spaces they are not ultimately defined by the territorialities or power geographies (Sassen 2006) of these nation states. Actors in global civil society interact with and resist fragmented and diverse counterparts, such as supranational institutions and organizations, network structures, and transnational corporations. To understand how conflicts are played out in this context, and how power is produced and reproduced, resisted and transgressed, I draw on elements of the framework of *governmentality theory* (Rose and Miller 2008; Rose 1999; Burchell 1993; Dean 1999).

Resisting green governmentality

Green governmentality studies were introduced as an approach to look beyond the apparent diffuse complexity of actors, policy levels, and arenas conceptualized as global governance, instead focusing on the forms of power, knowledge, practices, and identities produced by the "global climate regime" (e.g. Bäckstrand and Lövbrand 2006; Methmann 2010). Oels (2005) highlighted how the shift to "advanced liberal government" (Rose and Miller 2008) in environmental politics involved a definition of climate change as an economic issue requiring market-based solutions to facilitate cost-effective technological solutions, a development often conceptualized as "ecological modernization" (Mol and Spaargaren 2000). Further, green governmentality research demonstrated how these forms of governing involve processes of responsibilization as

an important element (Soneryd and Uggla 2015; Thörn and Svenberg 2016). In these processes, business and civil society actors take on new regulatory functions and responsibilities that were previously the responsibility of the state (Burchell 1993; Rose 1999), for example in self-regulatory practices of forest management. In this context, consumers, businesses, and CSOs have taken on a number of environmental responsibilities through practices defined in terms of green consumption and eco-branding.

Many established environmental movement organizations (EMOs) belong to the forces that have played an important role in establishing a discourse that strongly emphasizes moral agency and a market rationality by promoting green consumption, corporate self-regulation, and the establishment of market mechanisms such as carbon trading. This means that EMOs have engaged in new forms of policy networks, which have involved not only government institutions but also businesses. Such bodies have been set up either to solidify and implement objectives formulated by the government (i.e. management by objectives) or to establish certain codes and standards (i.e. soft-law or voluntary rules) meant to function as alternatives or complements to state regulation by legislation (e.g. Lidskog, Soneryd, and Uggla 2010; Sundström, Soneryd, and Furusten 2010). These forms of responsibilization have involved EMOs in both the construction of regulatory frameworks and the actual implementation of programs. In many cases, such implementation has also encountered resistance, revealing tension and conflict within the environmental movement action field. In particular, three such regulatory frameworks in the context of green governmentality have been the object of contestation: emissions trading, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Reducing Emissions from Forest Degradation and Forest Emission (REDD+).

Emissions trading has been the most important mechanism for achieving the Kyoto Protocol's target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It was initially supported by institutionalized EMOs gathering under the international umbrella of the Climate Action Network (CAN), which was resisted on this issue by an emerging climate justice movement (Schlosberg and Collins 2014), leading to a deep divide in the climate movement during the COP meeting in Copenhagen in 2009. Partly because of this resistance, institutionalized EMOs have since been re-evaluating emissions trading post-Copenhagen. The tension, however, remains, resulting in ambivalence in the broader climate movement as the approach to emissions trading oscillates between criticism that dismisses the system and a critique that emphasizes its inefficiency (Cassegård et al. 2017).

REDD+ is perhaps the most important example to date of global climate governance that involves development cooperation (e.g. Stephan 2012), including as an important dimension the participation of NGOs in the implementation of its project. The original REDD proposal aimed to reduce forest loss by including forests in a carbon trading scheme, where owners of forest land can make a commitment to preserve it and, in turn, be financially rewarded through carbon credits bought by other actors who wish to

compensate for their carbon emissions. REDD+ went beyond the issue of deforestation to also include issues of conservation and sustainable forest management. REDD+ pilot projects were primarily financed by donations from states and organizations, chiefly the UN REDD initiative, the World Bank, and the Norwegian state (cf. Hermanssen 2015; F letcher et al. 2016). McGregor et al. (2015: 138) argued that REDD+ involves "risks for those pursuing forms of social and environmental justice." My group's research found a similar ambivalence and tension around REDD+ in our interviews with climate activists at the COPs (Cassegård et al. 2017). Addressing this issue with a strong base in activist groups from the Global South, a NO REDD resistance campaign was launched and became highly visible in the context of the alternative spaces of the UNFCCC meeting.

The CDM has established a carbon market to reduce emissions in the Global South and involves so-called Certified Emissions Reductions that can be bought by "developed" countries to offset their greenhouse gas emissions. After its implementation in 2001, the CDM soon became the second biggest market in climate certificates (after the Emissions Trading System, ETS). A decade later, Methmann (201 3) argued that the CDM had become a "paradigmatic case" for a hegemonic "carbon governmentality." In the following years, however, resistance was staged repeatedly in the alternative spaces organized in the context of COP meetings—and across the Global South. These protests highlighted the perverse effects of CDM projects, such as the construction of a coal plant in a densely populated area in Madhya Pradesh, India (the Sasan Project: Carbon Trade Watch 2014), registered under the CDM on the grounds that the company claimed to employ more efficient coal technology. Activists pointed out how the effects of the project included increasing air pollution, land grabbing (which came with harassment and displacement of local inhabitants), massive pauperization of the (Indigenous) Adivasi, and the violent suppression of workers' protests (Thörn et al. 2017).

These examples illustrate how acts of ecological resistance in the twenty-first century have been directed not only at states, corporations, and supranational institutions but also at well-established actors *within* the environmental movement. Considering that power in the context of green governmentality is often exercised through processes of responsibilization, I argue that such resistance engages in a *politics of responsibility*.

Resistance as a politics of responsibility

The approach to responsibilization used here differs slightly from the early, highly influential works of Rose (1999) and Burchell (1993), as well as the research based on their theoretical formulation, which essentially lacks a conflict perspective. I argue that responsibilization should be understood as a process involving a *politics of responsibility*, referring to negotiation, conflict, and struggle over responsibility (Thörn

2016; Thörn and Svenberg 2016). This may include resistance to responsibilization and the soft disciplinary power involved in regularized access to policymaking (e.g. participation in the introduction of market mechanisms to fight climate change) and the discourse of moral responsibilization (encouraging green consumption). Such resistance also involves articulating a counter-discourse of responsibility, as, for example, when movement actors demand a re-responsibilization of governments who have shifted environmental responsibilities from the state to businesses and/or civil society. However, as emphasized by the Foucauldian approach, there is a close relationship between resistance and the forms of power it challenges; collective resistance is never "pure"—and it may challenge, transform, and reproduce government at the same time. This is exactly the logic at work in the examples of the politics of responsibility discussed in this chapter.

Ultimately, the politics of responsibility concerns the articulation of green governmentality in the context of global civil society, defining who is responsible for both causing and remedying environmental destruction. Let us consider again the formulation in the Paris Agreement (cited in the beginning of this chapter) and the rather grandiose claims it presented and condensed in the UNFCCC's press release (UNFCCC 2015). The implied claim is that we are all responsible for taking action. But, as several environmental activists that we interviewed expressed, if everyone is responsible, no one has responsibility (Thörn et al. 2017; Thörn and Svenberg 2016). In the terminology of discourse theory (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Laclau 2005), this remark highlights how "responsibility" is a discursive nodal point and an empty signifier that embodies the hegemonic climate governance discourse in the context of global civil society. The hegemonic operation of such an empty signifier is to unite a discursive field, and it does so by integrating various identities and strategies into a political order without making any profound changes in the power relationships that structure this order. It is empty in the sense that its meaning is not fixed. Due to this openness, a signifier works to embrace a multiplicity of different articulations, to provide cohesion, to work as an emotionally charged point of identification for a heterogeneous array of actors and political identities, and to encompass diverse and sometimes contradictory strategies and policies. One example of how a hegemonic discourse can integrate opposition and challenge is how the concept of "common but differentiated responsibilities," which is constantly repeated in official documents and speeches, serves as a response to, and as an operation to include (but not to meet), the demands to consider the inequalities between the Global North and South concerning "climate debt" and levels of carbon emissions.

An empty signifier gains hegemonic status when it closes off other possible articulations, in this case regarding how climate change could be addressed by alternative modes of global governance. It thus implicitly limits what it is possible for a speaker to say to be deemed credible. After all, can anyone, considering all the alarming facts on climate change, deny or contest the idea that each and every

individual, organization, corporation, nation, and supranational institution has a responsibility to act to stop it? But the translation of such "responsibility" into action is defined by its integration into a particular structure presented in terms of global climate governance.

It is important to emphasize that responsibilization is a process that, as a transfer of responsibilities, also always involves de-responsibilization. This occurs when politicians actively avoid taking responsibility, de-politicizing their own position, thus making the workings of power diffuse and abstract. Such de-responsibilization effectively projects the responsibility elsewhere (Thörn 2016).

To summarize my argument about responsibilization and resistance so far: while, in many cases, EMOs comply with the game of responsibilization, engaging in a politics of responsibility also offers possibilities of resistance, which come in three forms: (i) refusing responsibilization, for instance by rejecting offers to participate in policymaking processes; (ii) redefining "moral agency" while accepting the premises of responsibilization, for example by invoking the moral responsibility of corporations through confrontational action and "naming and shaming"; (iii) opposing market solutions and instead demanding a re-responsibilization of political institutions.

The third form of resistance represents a re-politicization of climate action in response to the de-politicization inherent in global climate governance. Such an approach became visible in the global public sphere of the UNFCCC meetings in 2009 when the emerging global justice movement presented itself to the world in the streets of Copenhagen and contributed to pushing established EMOs gathering under the umbrella of CAN into a process of re-strategizing. Among other things, this involved a questioning of the relevance of market mechanisms as well as the notion of the "moral agency" of green consumption, and instead demanded a re-responsibilization of political institutions. Such radicalization of ecological resistance has steadily intensified in post-Copenhagen mobilization and throughout the 2010s, reaching peaks during the 2019 climate strikes and the demonstrations and alternative spaces organized during the 2021 COP meeting in Glasgow. In the following two sections, I argue that these developments call for a dialogue between social movement and resistance studies.

Resistance and/or social movements?

Protest, resistance, social movements, and agency have rarely been a focal point in governmentality literature (Hansson, Hellberg, and Stern 2015; Larner and Walters 2004). To the extent that resistance did figure when the governmentality approach was developed based on Foucault's Collège de France lectures, it was primarily as an object to be regulated and possibly utilized for the purposes of governing (e.g. Rose and Miller 2008; Dean 1999; Walters 2012). Although Foucauldian approaches to governance in research on environmentalism (e.g. Agrawal 2005; Oels 2005; Bäckstand

and Lövbrand 2006; Luke 1999) more often focused on agency, the question of how advanced liberal government is resisted is trickier and has rarely received sufficient attention. When Foucault's own concept of resistance was mobilized to open up the governmentality perspective to analyses of conflict in the 2010s, suggestions were also made to integrate this approach with social movement theory (Death 2010; Ullrich and Keller 2014). In previous work (Thörn and Svenberg 2016), I have argued that conversely, the "analytics of resistance" in governmentality studies could also benefit from integrating certain elements of social movement theory to strengthen the attention given to conflict and collective agency involved in government.

Lilja and Vinthagen (2014) have developed a useful concept of resistance that relates to Foucault's "triangle of power" (Foucault 2007), which is accurate for capturing ecological resistance in the twenty-first century. First, *resistance to sovereignty* circumvents or undermines sovereign power centers; while ecological resistance in the twenty-first century has turned increasingly glocal, it continues to challenge nation-states, as for example, in the anti-nuclear movement in Germany and Japan in the 2010s and in the numerous anti-extractionist Indigenous struggles worldwide (e.g. Dhillon 2021; Claeys and Delgado Pugley 2017; Nixon 2011). Second, *resistance to discipline* refuses to participate in the practices that involve learning capacities and skills through which new subjectivities are constructed; ecological activists have resisted the life-style politics of green consumption, arguing that it sustains, rather than undermines, environmental destruction. Third, *resistance to biopower* involves broader strategies of creating counter-populations in the form of counter-cultures; in the context of ecological resistance a significant example of this strategy is the transition movement. I would argue that this form of resistance engages in a life-form politics that aims at a more profound transformation of everyday life compared to the consumerist life-style politics of green consumption. As argued by Törnberg (2018, 2021) such processes also enable the combination of resistance studies, social movement theory, and transition studies in a theory of social change that may also be conceived as revolutionary transformation.

In relation to Lilja and Vinthagen's (2014) interpretation of Foucault's triangle of power and the resistances inherent to it, I would add two dimensions. First, Lilja and Vinthagen do not discuss resistance to imperial power, and neither did Foucault. I would therefore add that sovereign power can itself be a form of resistance in the context of the field of global/international relations that involves unequal power relations between states. In the context of environmental struggles, such struggles have repeatedly taken place in relation to COP meetings when alliances of states in the Global South, supported by the climate justice movement, have challenged dominant nation states in the Global North around issues of climate debt. Second, I argue that there is a need for a distinction between the disciplinary techniques through which subjects are encouraged to engage with self-discipline and coercive discipline. Analyses of the annual COP meetings provide further support for those analyses that have highlighted how advanced liberal government not only shapes subjectivities

through new forms of self-discipline but also involves coercive disciplinary measures as an important element (e.g. Death 2013).

In the context of the climate movement, this development peaked at COP21 in Paris in 2015, as the French government declared a state of emergency. Addressing authorities' securitization measures is a key concern among climate activist groups and organizations present in the cities hosting the COPs. As shown by de Moor and Wahlström (2017), the police forces and activist groups continuously developed new street tactics in light of previous summit experiences. Such tactics included plans for major civil disobedience actions both inside and the outside the COP premises, addressing the UNFCCC, dominant states and corporate interests, as well as "hidden" direct action through which signboards announcing the COP meeting were subverted.

Compared to other Foucualdian approaches, Vinthagen and Lilja's (2014) theoretical formulation brings the concept of resistance closer to social movement theory. To clarify, the social movement perspective that I propose emphasizes that the identities and projects created through collective action always have the potential to go beyond counter-conduct and lead to a more profound societal transformation. I would also argue that my discussion of acts of ecological resistance demonstrates how such acts are increasingly difficult to distinguish from the kind of transformative action that we associate with social movements. Perhaps the transition movement is the best example of this. The transition movement can be viewed as a form of pre-figurative resistance (Willow 2021; Cretney et al. 2016; Chatterton and Pickerill 2010) that does not target a "chief enemy"; activists do not aim to conquer state power; whether on a local, national, or global level, their "immediate enemy" is a profoundly unsustainable modern life form. And yet, their resistance resembles social movement action in the sense that it performs a sustained collective action aiming at a profound transformation of the very organization of our daily lives.

How, then, should we understand the relation between acts of ecological resistance and social movement action? First, while environmental movements may involve a range of protest forms, including singular acts of nonviolence and sabotage (Malm 2020), it also transcends such temporary protests through *sustained* collective action, that is a chain of protests that may be linked to each other in different ways. Second, environmental movement formation *involves* linking, through a process of articulation (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Laclau 2005), collective acts to a movement discourse, involving goals to achieve structural change. This means that the social movement perspective emphasizes that the identities and projects created through collective action always have the potential to go beyond counter-conduct and lead to a more profound societal transformation. This way of thinking about the relation between social movements and social change differs, however, from the tendency in the new social movement literature to define social movements as producing some form of social change (Touraine 1981; Melucci 1989).

The climate justice movement represents just such a transformative movement project, challenging structures of global climate governance and corporate interest as well as the institutionalized sections of the environmental movement represented by CAN, which has committed itself to focusing on communication with states and corporate actors in the context of the COP meetings, an interaction that Bäckstrand et al. (2017) have termed "hybrid multilateralism." It has since successively grown through recurring global attention cycles (Rüdig 1995), involving a continued globalization of environmental activism. The attention cycle that began in 2019 seemed at first to have culminated in the climate strike in September of that year, appeared to be snuffed out by COVID-19, but re-emerged in 2021 when 100,000 people marched in the streets of Glasgow in the largest demonstration associated with a COP meeting since 2009.

But does it really make sense to talk about a *global* climate movement? Does it refer to any observable empirical reality? Skepticism is well founded when considering the heterogeneity of environmental collective action. I might also have confused the reader of this chapter by interchangeably referring to "the environmental movement" both in the singular and plural, and occasionally as "the climate movement." To address this question, it has to be emphasized that I treat "social movement" as an analytical concept; it is an abstraction from a messy and complex reality, constructed with the intention of providing some analytical clarity. Out of the heterogeneity of empirical elements that research on environmental activism takes into account (including actions, interactions, emotion rules, claims, and discursive positioning), I argue that collective identity needs to be seen as a privileged element. It is the name for a unity that is exhibited in public spaces in the shape of various collective actions such as demonstrations, direct actions, or manifestos. Nevertheless, such unity is always temporary and fragile. In between these moments of collective action, division and debate define the formation of a movement. It may even be argued that tension and conflict between different groups and positions active in movement mobilization are driving forces in the development of a social movement, up to the point when conflict makes collective action impossible. While the values, norms, goals, and even world views that define a movement's collective identity are certainly debated at various moments of social movement mobilization, internal movement tension is often about *strategy*. According to a conventional view, strategy presupposes identity; to have a collective strategy you must first agree on certain values and goals. In this view, and in Weberian terms, movement strategies are shaped according to certain values (value-rational action) and/or provide the means to reach certain goals (instrumental rationality).

This perspective on collective identity has been questioned and reversed by Laclau (1990: 233), who argued that "strategies create identities, not the opposite." Either way, the point is that collective agency is always constructed in the process of a strategic game (see Guillaume and Lemay-Hébert, this volume), involving the unification of heterogeneous elements and the identification of, and interaction with, adversaries (or

"enemies"). Importantly, as already pointed out in our discussion about resistance, movement strategies are also shaped by the strategies of their adversaries. Collective identities are the products of such performative strategic interaction. However, I would like to modify this view by emphasizing how identity and strategy represent moments in a dialectical *process* (none of them representing a more profound dimension of collective action than the other). Whether the analysis emphasizes how certain strategies follow from previously constructed collective identities or vice versa, would then depend on where your analysis begins, and then on the context and scale of collective action.

When the global justice movement appeared around the turn of the millennium, Naomi Klein (2000) coined the term "movement of movements" to capture its internal diversity. Not only did it encompass locally and nationally organized movements based on all continents, but also it united a wide range of previously formed political identities: unions, farmers, Indigenous people's struggles, feminists, autonomists, gay and anti-racism struggles, etc. They were all part of collective actions staged worldwide in the name of global justice. This was not an entirely new phenomenon. However, it may be argued that in the context of contemporary global capitalism, defined by increasingly complex patterns of conflict and diverse modes of exploitation, movements increasingly take the shape of movements of movements. Clearly, this development also becomes more pronounced when the action space of movements is expanded from local and national to global contexts. Building on the legacy of the anti-apartheid movement, the first trans-continentally networked movement of movements to construct a global space of action (Thörn 2009), the climate justice movement, primarily manifesting itself in the global public sphere of the COPs, is the most recent. It is undoubtedly dominated by environmental movements, but it also includes an array of other actors such as labor unions, making it perhaps even more heterogeneous in its composition than the global justice movement.

It goes without saying that the bigger the scale, and the more numerous and heterogeneous its elements, the more fragile and unstable a social movement's identity becomes. For example, in Glasgow in 2021 and in Copenhagen in 2009, a broad climate movement unity was perhaps only expressed in the collective action of the public demonstration that attracted approximately 100,000 participants, and even on these occasions, the heterogeneity of groups and demands were obvious (Wahlström, Wennerhag, and Rootes 2013). The logic of resistance in such a context is to adopt a "political minimalism" by identifying the lowest common discursive denominator, a practice stemming from an insight that profound ideological discussion would never take the actors to the point of public collective action. It also employs a "diversity of tactics," a practice drawing on bitter experiences of movement dissolution through conflicts concerning which protest methods are legitimate and which are not (e.g. when movement groups fall apart over the (il)legitimacy of street violence or sabotage).

The collective identities, whether thin or thick, that hold social movements together are produced through narratives. Narratives can be local or historically specific, such as the variations on a narrative of defeat that was constructed in connection with the "post-Copenhagen depression" in the early 2010s (de Moor and Wahlström 2019). However, social movements also produce and sustain meta-narratives, which assign meaning to local or time-specific stories by constructing the movement as an actor with a significant mission in human history (Cassegård and Thörn 2022). Such meta-narratives may both reflect and challenge hegemonic narratives. Lawson (2019: 234) argues that in the recent decades, we have seen "the return of revolution" but in a new shape, "representing a blurring of the revolutionary tradition," using the term "social movements-come- revolutionary movements" to capture this development. While I will argue that the social movement and the revolution as modern political phenomena have common historical roots, I will also point to how recent developments in the field of ecological resistance, manifested in its meta-narratives, provide new reasons for thinking about how theories of revolutions and social movements could be combined along these lines, as well as how this link can be mediated through the concept of resistance (also see Selbin, this volume).

Narratives of resistance

Social movement meta-narratives are defined by their modern utopian element. Historically, they are rooted in the eighteenth century American, French, and Haitian revolutions, in which the Enlightenment's secularized view on human action became anchored in collective action that aimed to create nothing less than an entirely new kind of society. In this sense, these revolutions gave birth to the modern social movement as a form of secularized *utopian* collective action (Thörn 2019). They were also invoked as historical and material "proof" of one of the key ideals of the Enlightenment modernity: that human history needs to be understood as a movement of linear progress toward ever more developed forms of life. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century social movements presented variations on the hegemonic Narrative of Progress. Green Progress was one of these variations, produced by the early environmental movement that emerged in the Global North in the early twentieth century, in the shape of a transnational network of nature conservation organizations (Cassegård and Thörn 2022). It is essentially defined by the idea that the task of the movement is to bring society on the path toward a future in which regulation of the capitalist economy has put an end to environmental destruction, while sustaining economic growth.

In contrast to this, the post-war ecological movement articulated an apocalyptic meta-narrative. The apocalyptic social movement narrative (Cassegård and Thörn 2018) mobilizes through "negative" utopian energies; the future as a threat of a disaster and its either/or scenario of massive collective action or apocalypse. In this sense, its critique

of progress does not make it anti-modern, as it promotes the idea that ecotopian collective action can change current conditions here and now, avoid a disaster, and perhaps even shape a better world.

One of the most influential moments of the apocalyptic narrative globally occurred in the run-up to the 2009 Copenhagen climate movement, when apocalyptic images were spread worldwide, for example in Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth*. The crisis for the environmental movement following the Copenhagen failure in 2009 was also a crisis for the apocalyptic narrative. It failed not only to persuade political leaders to take drastic action but also to instigate mass collective action. Established environmental organizations have attempted to respond to this by renewing the narrative of Green Progress. The post-apocalyptic narrative, on the other hand, has its roots in apocalyptic discourse, with which it shares important elements. But it also represents a break with the apocalyptic tradition.

The post-apocalyptic narrative (Cassegård and Thörn 2022; de Moor 2022) implies a different temporality compared to apocalyptic forms of environmentalism since it no longer mobilizes by referring to future threats; instead, it is a narrative of a disaster that has already begun. Unlike dystopias in popular culture (Kaplan 2016), in which any form of action is futile since it is too late to stop the disaster, the post-apocalyptic movement narrative mobilizes action through the process of mourning. The post-apocalyptic narrative implies that it is only when we recognize the fact that fatal damage has been done to the Earth and mourn the losses brought by capitalist modernity that our capabilities to act can be liberated. The post-apocalyptic narrative has partly emerged from activism in the Global South, defined by experiences of communities destroyed and populations displaced because of ongoing climate change and emphasizing that the climate issue is inseparable from that of global justice, and partly from the transition movement in the Global North (Cassegård and Thörn 2018). Importantly, the post-apocalyptic narrative has not replaced previously dominating narratives in the global environmental movement. Instead, we see a "struggle of narratives" since 2009; while the climate emergency movement tends to emphasize the apocalyptic perspective's either/or, the green progress narrative has been re-articulated in Big Green's support of the Green New Deal (Cassegård and Thörn 2022).

It has been argued that both apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic thinking, in opposing the narrative of green progress is also anti-utopian. I would, however, argue that both narratives have emerged embedded in the new social movement culture that has constructed *nowtopian* action forms (Thörn 2019). Nowtopia partly emerged as a child of the eros revolt of the 1960s. It is a strategy to construct "another world" as a "negation" of the hegemonic order here and now, and was first visible in the construction of the utopian spaces of the alternative communities that proliferated in urban squats and rural green communes, and more recently in urban gardening and transition communities. Nowtopia involves a concept of a total revolution in the sense of a profound reorganization of all aspects of social life. Nowtopia's emphasis on

present-oriented acts also brings social movement action closer to the resistance culture that has deep roots in the twentieth-century anarchist tradition. Here, the singular act of resistance is a symbolic and yet performative act that constructs the movement's identity and is a transformative moment that fundamentally makes visible and challenges hegemonic power structures. In this sense, nowtopia has affinities with what Balibar (2015) calls the "messianic experience of time." To borrow his formulation (2015: 245), nowtopia is a "non-linear, non-deterministic, non-homogeneous 'concept of historical time'." It can also be understood in the spatial terms of Foucault's (2002) "heterotopia," which is defined by the co-existence of a multiplicity of social and spatial forms of organization (Siegrist and Thörn 2020). This is the kind of present-oriented, radical heterogeneity that has defined the field of resistance and movement culture since 1968, and has been conceptualized both in terms of "new social movements" (Melucci 1989) and the multitude (Hardt and Negri 2005). Nowtopia's trans-local spatiality is both local and global in the sense of being mediated by communication technology. In terms of networks and mode of organization, it replaces international organization (in the sense of an organization composed of national organizations) with transversal networking.

Ecological resistance in the twenty-first century decenters the conceptual core of Enlightenment modernity. It rejects the *absolute* ideas of Progress, Emancipation, and Total Revolution but not the possibility of progress(es), total revolution(s), and emancipation(s). The new revolution is total in the sense of a notion of a profound change in all spheres of social life but not in the sense of a transformation of the totality of social relations at one stroke. While criticizing the absolute idea of human progress, it does not reject the possibility of emancipation from various forms of oppression and exploitation by transformative collective action.

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CHAPTER 29

CONSERVATIVE RESISTANCE

JEAN-FRANÇOIS DROLET

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the rise of a radical and increasingly transnational Right that sees itself as the only viable source of conservative resistance against globalization and "global governance" has become one of the most significant developments in the politics and international relations of the Euro-Atlantic region. In the broadest sense, this emerging coalition of right-wing forces is defined by strong commitments to ethno-nationalist discourses, with grievances aimed at immigrants and minority populations and (to a lesser degree) global capitalism and "liberal elites." Its leading figures emphasize images of cultural loss, memories of betrayal, and the debilitating consequences of late-modern life for the preservation of customary patterns of thought and behavior such as religion, social mores, and other "traditional" beliefs and practices passed down from generation to generation with symbolic meaning for the self-understanding of the community. They position themselves accordingly as the legitimate heirs to national traditions and culture against the destructive consequences of various liberal ideologies that mainstream conservative forces are said to have either collaborated with or failed to oppose with sufficient conviction.

This chapter offers an engagement with this increasingly influential strain of conservative resistance thinking, providing an outline of its critique of liberal orders and the perceived challenges they present.[1] Developed over several decades, this critique cuts across the conventional domestic/international divide and bears witness to the capacity of the radical Right to adapt to a wide variety of geopolitical and macroeconomic changes, producing new forms of reactionary struggles and disruptions. This continuity arises less from its capacity to defeat old ideological consensuses and replace these with its own alternatives as from its remarkable ability to adapt, recover, and fuse old concepts and ideological narratives into new adversarial syntheses and forms of political action. As we will see, what is at stake in this politics is not only the democratic gains that have been achieved in the context of the modern liberal state and the constitutionalization of world politics but also the political terrain upon which twentieth-century conceptions of the political are being re-amalgamated and represented

into new struggles over the meaning and future of human co-existence under conditions of globalization.

The "new" New Right

I use the label "New Right" to designate the assortment of writers, publications, and cultural platforms that has provided much of the intellectual impetus for the ideological renewal of the radical "anti-establishment" Right across Europe and North America (Sedgwick 2011; Hawley 2016; De Orellano and Michelsen 2019; McAdams and Castrillon 2022). The New Right takes many forms and expressions in different countries. In Europe, its historical origins can be traced back to the French *Nouvelle Droite* established during the late 1960s by Alain de Benoist, Guillaume Faye, Pierre Vial, Dominique Venner, and other militant right-wing intellectuals associated with the *Groupement de recherché et d'etudes pour la civilisation européenne* (GRECE).[2]

The *Nouvelle Droite* began as a group of young activists once aligned with neo-Nazi and fascist politics who broke from the far-right in the late 1960s and reinvented themselves as intellectuals and ideological entrepreneurs. The agenda of the *Nouvelle Droite* took shape as a response to the rise of the student movements and New Left countercultural forces. These forces were driven by a passionate commitment to civil rights, free speech, and university reforms, as well as a deep hostility to capitalism, colonialism, and all forms of authoritarianism. Theirs was a "countercultural" revolt insofar as its protagonists sought to completely reshape the cultural *Zeitgeist* in their own image, rather than simply providing an alternative within existing cultural and political ecologies. In the eyes of the *Nouvelle Droite*, the radicals who undertook their "long march through the institutions" after the students and workers protests of 1968 led the way not toward greater authenticity and emancipation but toward chaotic political anomie and the deracinating of all cultural identities.

At the same time, however, those who established the *Nouvelle Droite* at the time were deeply struck by the sophistication of the Marxist cultural theories sustaining the revolutionary fervor of students' and workers' strikes. This led to the realization that the post-war Right had seriously neglected the importance of cultural and intellectual activism in the maintenance and subversion of political power. In its obsessive struggle against communism, the Right had embraced the dogmatic free market ideology of the United States, along with its multicultural egalitarianism and consumerist culture of cheap entertainment. The *Nouvelle Droite* thus saw it as its mission to address this important failure. Instead of planning a political revolution or an electoral victory, its leading figures proceeded to establish new research networks and journals of ideas to renew the conservative critique of liberal modernity and forge sympathies in the realms of education, the media, and the arts. This is what they called "metapolitics."[3]

The concept of metapolitics was first developed by German liberals but later appropriated by the French reactionary Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821) (Bosteels 2010). As Guillaume Faye explains in his *Manifesto of the European Resistance* (2011: 190), the *Nouvelle Droite* redeveloped the concept during the 1970s, through a selective appropriation of the theories of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, to refer to the dissemination of cultural values, ideals, sentiments, and mentalities with the aim of instigating long-term political change by first shifting the boundaries of acceptable discourse within society.[4] Gramsci was by no means the only left-wing thinker who attracted the attention of *Nouvelle Droite* intellectuals in this context. Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Althusser, and Marx himself also became part of a "counter-encyclopedic" pedagogy of the Right designed to draw historical lessons by studying the mechanisms that allowed egalitarian ideas to take root so successfully in Europe during the twentieth century. But what distinguished Gramsci from other left-wing thinkers was the non-egalitarian potential of his theory of cultural power, along with the organizational lessons that conservative forces could derive from it in their struggle against liberal modernity (Taguieff 1984).

In the major ideological realignments of the 1970s, metapolitics thus became a key resource to reorient the radical Right away from its association with historical fascism and the violent anti-intellectualism of skinhead subculture. The *Nouvelle Droite* instead pointed to the more ambiguous constellation of interwar philosophical explorations and anti-liberal political experimentations that has come to be known as the German "Conservative Revolution" as its main ideological forbearers.[5] By the 1980s, the strategy had inspired the creation of similar movements in Italy, Belgium, Germany, and other countries across Western Europe. The further expansion of those networks across Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and Russia after the end of the Cold War led to the development of a significant transnational network of publications, publishing companies, study groups, conferences, front organizations, and online platforms that make up what participants and observers today simply call the "European New Right" (Wegierski 1993; Peunova 2008; Gianoncelli 2021).

In the United States, the emergence and consolidation of a similar agenda is closely linked to the historical development of the so-called "paleo-conservative" movement led by intellectuals such as Sam Francis, Paul Gottfried, and Thomas Fleming. The term "paleo-conservatism" emerged and gained traction during the mid-1980s to designate a diverse group of traditional conservatives who became increasingly dissatisfied with the growing influence within the Republican establishment of neoconservative and neoliberal strains of conservatism that were also often designated as the "New Right" in the English-speaking world at the time (Fleming and Gottfried 1988; Scotchie 1999; Drolet and Williams 2020). For paleo-conservatives, these developments were symptomatic of the moral and political degeneration of the US conservative movement itself, which had wholeheartedly embraced the hedonistic commercial culture of late-

modern capitalism, while accommodating the political correctness of the Left and dismissing traditional conservative positions as political liabilities (Francis 1994; Gottfried and Spencer 2015).

Long before the Donald Trump became president of the United States in 2016, paleo-conservatives sought to foment a populist revolt that would escalate the radicalism of conservative positions in the domestic and global "culture wars." They saw the first glimmers of this revolt in Pat Buchanan's "America First" challenge to the incumbent President George H. W. Bush in the presidential primaries of 1992 (Buchanan 1990; Fleming 1991; Francis 1992). The aim was not so much a return to classical conservatism as the creation of a "New Fusionism" that would combine the traditionalism and anti-globalism of the Old Right with the modernist rebellious spirit that yielded the American Revolution (Fleming 1991). In their eyes, however, overthrowing the incumbent regime was not simply a question of making decisive electoral gains. If paleo-conservatism was to lead a revolt, Francis wrote at the time, it had to work towards the construction of "a countervailing cultural establishment, a 'counter-hegemony' … that is independent of the dominant cultural apparatus and is able to generate its own system of beliefs" (Francis 1993: 2). Also drawing explicitly on Gramsci, Francis saw what he called "Middle American Radicalism" (MARS) as an untapped source of "post-bourgeois resistance" against globalization and the follies of internationalist foreign policies (Francis 1991: 17):

> Abandoning the illusion that it represents an establishment to be "conserved," a new American right must recognize that its values and goals lie outside and against the establishment and that its natural allies are not in Manhattan, New Haven, and Washington but in the increasingly alienated and threatened strata of Middle America. The strategy of the right should be to enhance the polarization of Middle Americans from the incumbent regime, not to build coalitions with the regime's defenders and beneficiaries. … The more salient concerns of post-bourgeois Middle Americans that a new right can express are those of crime, educational collapse, the erosion of their economic status, and the calculated subversion of their social, cultural, and national identity by forces that serve the interests of the elite above them and the underclass below them, but at their expense.

The "Buchanan Revolution" never really materialized. But paleo-conservatives in the following decades have continued to provide intellectual support to a wide range of agents and ideological forces challenging the prevailing liberal order nationally and internationally. This includes the Tea Party, the Alt-Right, "Trumpism," and a whole range of ideological forces gravitating around radical right-wing publishing and media platforms such as Counter-Current Publishing, the North American New Right, American Renaissance, the Charlemagne Institute, and other agents of white

nationalism. Like their European interlocutors, this fledging constellation of conservative voices sees itself as part of an ideological vanguard charged with fighting a long "war of position" on behalf of the large, culturally conservative populations it claims to represent. Greg Johnson, one of the leading figures of the North American New Right, describes the project as a more explicitly "race-focused" adaption of the metapolitical strategy developed by the French *Nouvelle Droite* in previous decades (Johnson 2012):

> Because of the blending of European stocks and breakdown of more compact European national identities in North America, we are forced to stress the deeper roots of common European identity, including racial identity. … The primary metapolitical project of the North American New Right is to challenge and replace the hegemony anti-white ideas throughout our culture and political system. The entire cultural and political mainstream—including every shade of the "respectable" political spectrum—treats white racial consciousness and white self-assertion as evil. Our goal is to critique and destroy this consensus and make white racial consciousness and self-assertion hegemonic instead, so that no matter what political party wins office, white interests will be secured. Our goal is a pluralistic white society in which there is disagreement and debate about a whole range of issues. But white survival will not be among them.

New class managerialism

In Europe as in North America, the New Right's metapolitical project rests on a critical exposition of the material and ideological power of modern liberalism. The aim is not only to regenerate the bases of conservative thought for the twenty-first century but also to supply a renewed radical Right with an analytical basis for its eventual return to political prominence. This analysis moves in many directions and draws on a wide variety of earlier right-wing critics of liberal democracy. But one set of arguments underpinning many variants of New Right attacks on liberal orders since the end of the Cold War is the elite theory of "New Class managerialism."

The concept of the New Class has origins in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century anarchist critiques of Soviet-style communism,[6] but it was developed into a more substantive political sociology in the later work of figures such as Bruno Rizzi (1985 [1939]), Adolph Berle and Gardiner Means (1967 [1932]), and especially the US political theorist James Burnham. Burnham first exposed his influential theses in *The Managerial Revolution* (1941), as he was abandoning his earlier commitments to Trotskyism to become one of the leading public intellectuals of the American Right. Looking to identify the main characteristics of the new mass societies that he saw emerging around the world, Burnham perceived important similarities between the

political-economic formations of Stalinist Russia, Nazi Germany, and the United States under Roosevelt and New Deal liberalism. He argued that the bourgeoisie that dominated the society and politics of the nineteenth century had been displaced from power not by Marx's proletariat but by a "New Class" elite of managers and technicians, who possessed the skills and expertise required to direct the large-scale organizations typical of the economy that the bourgeoisie had created. Burnham's analysis had a significant influence on George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984*. As Orwell explains in a succinct 1946 summary of Burnham's thesis,

> Capitalism is disappearing, but Socialism is not replacing it. What is now arising is a new kind of planned, centralized society which will be neither capitalist nor, in any accepted sense of the word, democratic. The rulers of this new society will be the people who effectively control the means of production: that is, business executives, technicians, bureaucrats and soldiers, lumped together by Burnham under the name of "managers." These people will eliminate the old capitalist class, crush the working class, and so organize society that all power and economic privilege remain in their own hands. Private property rights will be abolished, but common ownership will not be established. The new "managerial" societies will not consist of a patchwork of small, independent states, but of great super-states grouped round the main industrial centers in Europe, Asia, and America. These super-states will fight among themselves for possession of the remaining uncaptured portions of the earth but will probably be unable to conquer one another completely. Internally, each society will be hierarchical, with an aristocracy of talent at the top and a mass of semi-slaves at the bottom.

According to Burnham, one of the main socio-economic phenomena driving these global transformations was the rise of large, publicly traded corporations owned by widely dispersed stockholders who may have no interest or input in how the company operates so long as their investment remains profitable. Conversely, the decision-makers and technical experts hired by owners to run and oversee the daily operation of such companies need not own a single share of stock in the business. Through this separation of ownership from control of the economy, the new managerial elite was able to make its goals predominate over those of shareholders. These goals consisted primarily in maintaining and extending the institutions that it controlled, and in ensuring that the needs for and rewards of the technical skills managers possess were steadily increased.

Burnham perceived that not only industrial establishments but also state agencies and all other significant organizations were being taken over by this New Class of managerial professionals, who pursued their own interests at the expense of the wider public good. He saw that, unlike the authoritarian strands that prevailed in communist and fascist regimes, elites in liberal democratic societies tended to rely on the manipulation of cultural symbols, desires, and material incentives rather than force to

acquire and exercise managerial power. Just as the old liberalism rationalized bourgeois interests, the new managerial liberalism provided the emerging New Class with the ideological combination of utopianism, meliorism, scientism, secularism, hedonism, and cosmopolitanism that reflected and justified the functional imperatives of the managerial revolution: the merger of state and economy, the centralization of government at the expense of local authority and mediating institutions, the diffusion of mass education, consumerism, and the mass media.

New Right intellectuals build on various aspects of this diagnosis to argue that managerial liberalism has become the dominant political form across the Western world over the course of the twentieth century and is now in the process of becoming a global phenomenon. In this account, members of the New Class today include corporate executives, lawyers, computer programmers, publicists, academics, bureaucrats, and "consultants" of all sorts who occupy positions of economic and political power in the post-industrial "information" society. Although they sometimes hold conflicting political opinions on the matters of the day, these professionals are said to constitute a New Class insofar as their livelihoods do not rest on the ownership of property as such, but on information, expertise, and the reproduction of a globalized capitalist economy in which the progressive values of education, cultural capital, mobility, technical knowledge, and connections to cosmopolitan networks have become the primary determinants of salary, status, and social advancement.[7]

In this view, the New Class is "liberal" insofar as its continuous expansion hinges on a series of declared commitments to the interests and well-being of others, to universal justice, equality, and human rights but without ever pressing for significant economic reforms that go beyond or threaten the interests of the incumbent managerial elites. The New Class sees itself as the antidote to the bigoted, parochial, and repressive world views and attitudes that it associates with the heartland and the mindless flag-waving patriotism of working- and lower-middle-class suburbs. Through intrusive taxation, anti-racist "empowerment campaigns," "sensitivity training," "decolonized curricula," and a whole range of other correctional interventions, its re-educative mindset encroaches into practically all aspects of social and family life. Whereas classical liberalism emphasized the merits of distributed powers, the virtues of self-government, natural rights, and the importance of protecting civil society from state interference, managerial liberalism promotes the application of "expert" knowledge to solve social problems, provide social services, fight prejudices, and eliminate residual bourgeois commitments to particular national, regional, social, religious, and biological identities.

Global managerialism

The theorists of the New Right argue that liberal modernity has arrived at its logical conclusion in our present age of globalization. One of the core claims sustaining this

analysis is that managerialism as a form of socio-political power is intrinsically globalist. In the first instance, this is simply because the organizational rationality underpinning the management of public affairs transcends the specificity of any given culture (Gottfried 1999: 74). The global expansion of this administrative will to power is also mandated by the progressive universalism validating the normative premises of the managerial revolution, and by the endless opportunities that technological innovation offers to address a wide variety of political and developmental challenges in a global, "anarchical" arena unregulated by a central enforcing authority.

In this view, however, the real driving force behind economic and cultural globalization lies not in the profit motive of capitalism or in the tragic dilemmas of *realpolitik* as traditionally conceived by Marxist or Realist scholars but in the functional dynamics of managerial liberalism itself. As Burnham had already noted in the 1940s, long before the outbreak of the First World War, the old structures of bourgeois capitalism had lost their ability to organize large geographical regions effectively and cope with systemic crises of overproduction and overaccumulation within the constraining political framework of the sovereign nation-state, with its parochial loyalties and destabilizing ethnic antagonisms. The managerial elites that came to dominate state and economic institutions over the course of the twentieth century have sought to overcome these limitations by establishing new transnational structures and organizations designed to facilitate the coordination of resources and markets in the "under-developed world" and wherever else they did not already exist. As these networks expanded from the national to international and supranational settings after the Second World War, the functional imperatives of these instruments of organizations—along with the interests of those who control them—have outgrown the metaphysics of the nation-state and become "increasingly alienated from the historic institutions and values of pre-managerial society" (Francis 2016: 471–473, 533). As Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier declare in their influential manifesto for the European New Right (2012 [1999]: 29):

> In the process of globalization, Western civilization is promoting the worldwide domination of a ruling class whose only claim to legitimacy resides in its abstract manipulations (logico-symbolic) of the signs and values of the system already in place. Aspiring to uninterrupted growth of capital and to the permanent reign of social engineering, this New Class provides the manpower for the media, large national and multinational firms, and international organizations. This New Class produces and reproduces everywhere the same type of person: cold-blooded specialists, rationality detached from day-to-day realities. It also engenders abstract individualism, utilitarian beliefs, a superficial humanitarianism, indifference to history, an obvious lack of culture, isolation from the real world, the sacrifice of the real to the virtual, an inclination to corruption, nepotism and to buying votes.

It is in this specific ideological context that New Rightists in the United States and in Europe understand and attribute so much importance to the formulation and trajectory of US foreign policy over the course of the twentieth century. Torn between the progressive demands of its founding narrative of universal rights and its desire to preserve the geopolitical dominance of the West after the collapse of European imperialism, the United States' post-war bid to world supremacy is said to have hatched a completely new paradigm of diplomacy based on two interrelated delusions. The first was the belief that new means of communications and organization could generate a new "internationalist" view of the world, as expressed in demands for collective security, the nuclear test ban, the establishment of the human rights regime, international tribunals, and so on. The second was the conviction that the United States' historic rise to power corresponds to a fundamental transformation in the nature of world politics as such. The Catholic "counter-revolutionary" Thomas Molnar, one of de Benoist's more senior co-authors, had already noted these trends in the early 1960s (Molnar 1962: 110):

> The first thing that strikes us in perusing books, articles, debates, panel discussions, or speeches by public figures is the belief that we face a *new situation*. The reasons given for this belief are: the possibility of nuclear destruction and danger from nuclear fallout; the existence of the United Nations as a hope for a peaceful world; the anticolonial revolution in the name of freedom and independence; the necessity for the possessing nations to give aid to the underdeveloped ones; the outlawing of war and rule of law over the world; and the possibility of establishing a world government. It is assumed, in fact, that for the first time in history the positive and negative forces liberated by science prescribe the organizational unity of mankind, the alternative being total extinction.

In this interpretation, what was distinctively liberal and American about this emerging internationalist vision was the inability to recognized that the increased complexity of world politics has no bearing whatsoever on the consistency of human motives across time and place. This led the foreign policy establishment to underestimate Soviet intentions in the aftermath of the Second World War. Rather than forcing a decisive military confrontation with communism as the archenemy of Christianity and Western historic nationalities, the United States adopted a policy of "containment" predicated on the conviction that the West had to wait and work to accelerate the historical-ideological process by which communism would inevitably run its course and become liberalized (Fleming and Gottfried 1988: xiii).[8]

Containment gave tremendous impetus to the expansion of managerial networks across the transatlantic region and the "Third World." Domestically, the long-term maintenance of a defensive military posture in an ever-growing number of operational

theaters abroad generated constant demands for larger administrative state institutions, if only because of the need to continuously recruit, finance, and train armed forces capable of fighting different kinds of wars on different kinds of geographical terrains. In the Euro-Atlantic region, containment led to the establishment of multiple regional security pacts and the foundations of global liberal power in the form of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Economic Community, the Helsinki Conference, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and a whole series of treaties and executive agreements sponsored by transatlantic foreign policy bureaucracies with deep connections to universities, corporations, and banking and legal institutions. Containment and the fight against communism also facilitated the expansion of vast new managerial networks in the "Third World." These networks targeted "traditional" cultures and modes of social organization under the guise of various "modernization" and "development" programs designed to secure stable governments that could channel the aggressive resentment of decolonizing nations into consumption and support for liberal economic internationalism (Faye 1981; Gottfried 2 007; Francis 2016: 473–474).

The globalization of managerial networks in the North, as in the South, was very much a reflection of how the managerial elites understood their own identity and relationship to liberal modernity: materialism without class conflict, secularism without irreverence, democracy without disobedience. In reality, managerial liberalism rested on a series of unstable alliances with the forces of nationalism, imperialism, and racism, which the rise of the New Left and other countercultural movements during the 1960s rendered increasingly problematic.

Yet, despite considerable successes in exposing these alliances and challenging various forms of discrimination, the capacity for resistance and transformation of these countercultural forces were quickly assimilated into the expanding order of liberal managerialism. New Rightists attribute this assimilation to the paradoxical but characteristic inability of the intellectual leaders of the Left to appreciate the diversity of working-class culture, along with the resources it provides for common decency, solidarity, and resistance. After they failed to gain the support of trade unions and the formal organizations of the Old Left, these movements struggled to reproduce themselves independently of the society they so scornfully rejected. Instead, the new transnational social movements emerging out of the defeated democratic surges of the 1960s largely rejected party politics and formal organized representation, reorienting their activity towards a "global arena" and favoring postmodern discourses of individual emancipation driven by a deep distrust of all party and state institutions. But far from holding liberal managerial power to account, the proliferation of these transnational activist networks since the 1970s has, in fact, contributed to its reproduction and expansion by supplying ineffectual critiques that provide the appearance of resistance and opposition without having the remotest chance of fundamentally challenging liberal economic and political institutions at either a

philosophic or a practical level (Gottfried 2005; de Benoist and Champetier 2012 [1999]: 46–48; Francis 2016: 524–44; Andersen 2018: 59–72).

New Rightists contend that the phenomenal success of managerial liberalism during the Cold War has given rise to some of the most destructive aspects of global politics. In Europe, decades of managerial expansion are said to have led to the development of what Molnar called a " 'monoclass' of déclassé administrators" tasked with dissolving the sovereign nation-state into an amorphous federative union, the continuous eastward expansion of which has transformed the continent into a space without cultural coherence and sense of political determination (quoted in O'Meara 2013: 28). In what is now the Global South, the result of decades of Western developmental programs is not the wholesale transformation of "traditional" societies predicted by modernization theorists and aid agencies but the evisceration of local cultures and political structures to the profit of new hybrid types of anti-liberal and anti-Western political agencies with few organic ties to the communities in which they operate (Faye 2012 [2004]; Francis 2016: 473–474; O'Meara 2013: 210–257). New Rightists have also been particularly critical of international efforts to securitize these failed modernization initiatives through a major refunctioning of the Cold War managerial complex involving NATO expansion and the proliferation of new globalist formulas: "rules-based international order," "democratic enlargement," "human security," "peacekeeping," "responsibility to protect," "global poverty reduction," the "global climate crisis," etc. In this view, the continuous expansion of this vast security-development complex to fight the "global war on terror" during the 2000s and beyond has intensified anti-Western sentiments among Muslim populations, spawning a refugee crisis that continues to exacerbate the long-standing "problem" of "Third World" economic migration.

The conspiratorial character of these polemics against immigration serves to rationalize a sense of disempowerment and impotence in the face of rapid socio-cultural and economic change. According to an influential narrative recently revived by the French novelist Renaud Camus, for example, the alleged "replacement" of white European populations at large with non-European peoples is part of a wider process of "de-culturation" engineered by global elites to create a more docile and completely malleable human being (Camus 2018 [2011]). Faye similarly describes the situation as a process of reversed colonization in which European civilization faces the prospect of being "replaced on its own soil by the rejects of other nations" (Faye 2016: 23).

Paleo-conservatives have been disseminating similar "theories" since the late 1980s, lamenting the open-border policies of a New Class that welcomes immigration as a bonanza of "new opportunities for managing civil rights, ethnic conflicts, education, health, housing, welfare, social therapy, and assimilation itself" (Francis 1997: 31).[9] In North America as in Europe, this managerial approach to immigration is seen as part of a wider effort to build a global constitutional order that will subordinate the decision-making process of states in a wide variety of areas, including human rights, the environment, labor laws, health, and political-military affairs. Under the guise of

equality, pluralism, and tolerance, this ever-expanding system of "global liberal governance" forecloses the legitimacy of "native" articulations of values or rights and opposes the right of national publics to democratically support anti-liberal positions. Liberal structures of governance place such decisions in the hands of managerial elites, who seek the institutional power to adjudicate such rights and enforce their decisions over national decision-making bodies in ways that empower minorities vis-à-vis national majority cultures.

In these universalist legalistic maneuvers, New Rightists see a homogenizing logic of equivalence that reveals the incoherence nested at the heart of the egalitarian project of the Left. As de Benoist explains, "If all men are equal, if they are all fundamentally the same, if they are all 'men like others,' far from the unique personality of each of them being able to be recognized, they will appear, not as irreplaceable, but on the contrary as interchangeable" (de Benoist 2011: 81). What results is therefore not an increase in cosmopolitan pluralism and diversity, as some on the postmodern Left would have it, but the removal of all cultural barriers to sameness: "standardization of lifestyles, reduction of differences and particularities, conformity of attitudes and behaviours" (de Benoist 1996). The main political consequence is that constructing durable identities that cohere over time and space and can effectively mobilize populations for collective action is becoming impossible.

Mobilizing the opposition

One could be forgiven for reading the New Right as the latest manifestation of a long-standing ideological tradition of reactionary pessimism and cultural despair (Stern 1974 [1961]; Herf 2002 [1984]). And in many ways, it is just that. At the same time, however, the conditions of crisis and decadence depicted in its analyses are also presented as an opportunity for the reassertion of a more "authentic" conservative agency that can harness the social forces available to reverse the situation. Here, New Right discourses become part of a wider mobilization strategy where the question of resistance gets entwined with transformative, revolutionary aspirations as historical and analytic narratives are turned more explicitly to practical use.

In ways that often resonate with the dialectic analyses of the radical Left, the New Right avers that the globalizing politics of managerial liberalism create the conditions of possibility of its own overcoming. First, this is because liberal managerialism consistently attacks the economic and social positions of those who refuse to adapt to the forces and demands of globalization. In North America as in Europe, this represents large, semi-skilled, geographically immobile, and predominantly white populations for whom the more "fluid" and relativistic ethos of liberal modernity is irreconcilable with the traditional values they have been taught to protect—hard work, self-reliance, family, authority, civic duty, patriotism, etc. These voters find that their views and concerns are

constantly denigrated as insular and bigoted by a New Class elite that can afford to sustain progressive, "anti-racist" views because their affluence and privileges shield them against having to compete and share spaces, schools, and job markets with the minorities they have sought to empower for decades. For the New Right, this creates all sorts of generational inequities and opportunities to turn these "silent majorities" into reflexively antagonistic agents of political change—not least because economic sectors affected by globalization and population movement now go beyond declining industries to include once protected "New Class" professions threatened by offshoring and automation (Francis 1996: 13).

Second, New Rightists aver that the hedonistic ethical framework sustaining the hegemonic rule of managerial liberalism tends to fragment societies into ever more diverse groups, each advocating their own programs, identity, and interests. This inhibits collective action and weakens the progressive state's ability to enact its promises through appeals to collective solidarity and national identity. As Faye (2010 [1998]) emphasizes, this sense of failure is reflected in the general incredulity toward Enlightenment meta-narratives of progress that sociologists associate with our contemporary condition of "post" modernity; it is also evident in the ways in which Western leaders increasingly rely on negative legitimation tactics to authorize their rule: "Politicians no longer say, 'Vote for us because we've got the right solutions and we'll improve your living conditions' … Instead they say (implicitly), 'Vote for us, since even though we're a bunch of good-for-nothings, bunglers and bullies, at least we'll protect you from fascism' " (Faye 2010 [1998]: 94).

At the same time, the end of the Enlightenment project heralded by post-modernism is viewed transformed by New Right intellectuals as an opportunity to revive traditions and reaffirm the value of myth and the ancient, agonistic world view that they associate with the best cultural and political achievements of Western civilization—what Spengler called the "Faustian spirit" (Steuckers 2021). This revival itself rests on the rehabilitation of an ethno-politics disgraced by its association with eugenics and historical fascism by rearticulating this politics in the less offensive language of "identitarian" cultural relativism (Taguieff 1993). As Michael O'Meara (2013) writes in his sympathetic overview of the movement, "from the identitarian's perspective, postmodernism's broadsides constitute an emphatic justification of tradition's particularity and the fact that we are who we are only because we make certain decisions to identify with and defend *our* particular system of truth." For the New Right, the socially constructed nature of all historical narratives, "the multiplicity of these narratives, and their absence of closure are cause for commitment, not despair, for the culturally relative 'truths' born of one's own identity are necessarily more meaningful than those that are not" (O'Meara 2013: 261–262).

Identitarianism thus affirms the value and importance of recognizing differences between cultures, ethnic groups, races, and civilizations, along with the political processes and ideological mechanisms that maintain a healthy degree of segregation and

estrangement between them. De Benoist (1980: 20) speaks in this context of a "right to difference". While asserting the absence of objective criteria for determining a hierarchy of cultures, races, or ethnic groups, New Right "differentialism" casts itself as an ethico-political response to the perceived threat posed by liberal multiculturalism and racial miscegenation (de Benoist 2004; Tudor 2014; Johnson 2020). Appropriating the language of the Left, the New Right thus presents itself as the bearer of a more authentic understanding of what it means to champion diversity, pluralism, and multiculturalism in our present age of globalization. As German New Rightist Pierre Krebs declares, "the future of this world will never stop being many-voiced, multicoloured, multicultural, and multihistorical as long as the human species that bears it remains permanently multiracial, that is to say … as long as the homogeneity of the peoples remains a guarantee of the heterogeneity of the world" (Krebs 1995: 29–30).

In this view, the disorientating temporalities and disastrous demographic and environmental consequences of neoliberal globalization have made the renewal of traditions and revitalization of local communities imperative (de Benoist and Champetier 2012 [1999]). This is what Kaalep and Meister call "ethnofuturism" (Kaalep and Meister 2020: 37):

> Maybe the defeat of fascism and the transformation of Marxism into its post-modernist absurdities was necessary for the next leap in our history. The new ideology to make this leap possible would include elements of other organic ideologies merged with a futuristic vision of the world and political methods of the postmodernists ("fight fire with fire"), but with a metaphysical and traditionalist core.

Faye calls his own influential version of this synthesis *Archeofuturism* (2010 [1998]: 45–46):

> To envisage a future society that combines techno-scientific progress with a return to the traditional answers that stretch back into the mists of time. This is perhaps the true face of post- modernity … Could we not imagine and foresee a scenario where most of humanity reverts to living in traditional societies that consume little energy, and are socially more stable and happy, while—in the context of globalisation—a minority continues to live according to the techno-industrial model? Might there be two parallel worlds in the future, the worlds of a new Middle Ages and of Hyperscience? Who would be living in each of these worlds, and in what numbers? All daring and creative thought must think the unthinkable. I believe that *Archeofuturism*, an explosive meeting of opposites, is the key to the future, simply because the paradigm of modernity is no longer viable on a global scale.

New Rightists aver that the United States' geopolitical decline following its disastrous invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the financial crisis of 2008 has significantly undermined the reproductive capabilities of global liberal managerialism, while strengthening the particularist forces that could potentially carry out such major transformations in contemporary politics and international relations. This has generated different responses and proposals across New Right intellectual networks.

In the United States, paleo-conservatives and other writers associated with the North American New Right and other factions of the Alt-Right see the failures of Atlanticism as a long-awaited opportunity to mobilize wider support for a politics more explicitly and narrowly dedicated to the defense of white nationalism at home and aboard. This would be achieved through an aggressive process of de-bureaucratization and power devolution, a sharp curb on immigration, and a disentanglement from existing military alliances and international institutions. What is needed is a new, streamlined form of interstate defense cooperation based on shared civilizational interests and more narrowly focused on guaranteeing the national security of its member states (Francis 2012; Gottfried 1995; Radix 2016; Johnson 2018).

New Right ideologues in Western Europe have gone further, arguing for the development of new forms of neo-medieval empires or civilizational great spaces in which smaller "ethno-political" units could form a wider regional order based on common cultural bases and commonalities. Channeling the revered legacy of the interwar "Conservative Revolution," these proposals fuse tradition with technological elitism and notions of post-egalitarian communal solidarity in a bid to move Europe beyond the aggregative, interests-maximizing model of the European Union. As de Benoist emphasizes, this new order would draw on a shared cultural heritage and be powerful enough to resist other regions. But because of its lack of universalizing logics and authority, it would not necessarily threaten the autonomy of its constituent political orders within it, neither would it menace other regional formations beyond its boundaries. Like Faye, Robert Steuckers, and others, de Benoist emphasizes the land-oriented character of European civilization, suggesting that Russia should somehow be included in this new regional order instead of the sea-based powers like Great Britain and the United States (Thiriart 2018 [1981]; de Benoist 1994; Steuckers 2017; Lowell 2019).[10]

This is also a key feature of the "neo-Eurasionism" advocated by more aggressive New Right Russian affiliates such as Alexander Dugin, Alexander Prokhanov, and Sergey Glazyev. Neo-Eurasianism envisages the unification of all Russian-speaking peoples through a forced dismantlement of the former republics of the Soviet Union. In this vision, the creation of a greater Russian "heartland" stands as the staging act for the establishment of a wider "Slavic–Turkik" strategic union that would guarantee individual autonomy for the Russians, as well as for Tatars, Chechens, Armenians, and other Slavic nationalities. This union would be constructed on the fundamental principle of a shared hostility toward liberal modernity and draw on the traditionalism

championed by the New Right as a binding source of transnational resistance linking Europe, Russia, and possibly even the Middle East and the conservative forces of "Middle America" (Dugin 2014; Dugin 2021; Laruelle 2008).

New Rightists in Eastern Europe, however, tend to be a lot more ambivalent about this potential rapprochement with Russia. Whereas some do see Russia as a natural ally in the struggle against liberal modernity and the consumer civilization of the West, many regard Russia as a long-term geopolitical enemy of the historical nationalities and traditions of Eastern and Central Europe. They are therefore hostile to all forms of Eurasianist visions and ideologies, especially since the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. In their eyes, the combination of Christianity with the nationalism of the nation-state remains the most potent and realistic formula for the construction of a new "Europe of Nations" inspired by the experience and realities of the "Intermarium" (the lands between the Baltic Sea, the Adriatic Sea, and the Black Sea), where religion and "the unbroken, centuries-long line of a healthy national development have survived the communist years and show the promise of surviving even more vicious strains of the same ideology" (Kaalep and Meister 2020: 87–88).[11]

Conclusion

Engaging with the political sociology of the New Right helps correct the tendency in many quarters to dismiss the resurgence of the radical Right as a passionate but momentary, anti-intellectual reaction against the dislocating pressures of economic globalization. While it does, indeed, exhibit strong atavistic characteristics and tendencies, the contemporary radical Right is also the product of a decades-long attempt to craft an intellectual, cultural, and political project capable of fostering resistance against liberal orders by explaining what is unsatisfactory with the current social reality, identifying the agents of change, and providing norms for criticism and practical goals for transformation.

As is clear from this overview, central to this analysis is the claim that liberal democracy as it is presented and widely understood in the public domain today belongs to a bourgeois world that was lost a long time ago. Drawing lessons from Gramsci and the successes and failures of the New Left, its polemicists want to show that the critique of dogmatism that instigated the Enlightenment project has itself become a constellation of self-serving dogmas—a "soft-totalitarianism that controls all choices and options" to ensure that "the mass of consumers lacks the means to even imagine an alternative to liberalism" (Kaalep and Meister 2020: 33–34). In this inverted postmodern reality, it is not the egalitarianism of the Left but the reconstruction of tradition that is said to have become the main vehicle for a spontaneous criticality that can resists systematization.

Adorno had already anticipated this move amidst the culture wars of the late 1960s. In "On Tradition" (1992 [1968]), a little-known essay reflecting the increasing pessimism of his later writings, Adorno reminds us that the word "tradition" comes from the Latin *tradere*, to hand over or hand down. This metaphorical notion of passing on something from one generation to another "expresses physical proximity and immediacy" (Adorno 1992 [1968]: 75). It is rooted in a feudal mode of production that has long been destroyed by the industrialized division of labor and the directed change sought by bourgeois society.[12] Already in Kant's original formulation, critique was set out as an effort to overcome the tyranny of the past by making use of our own spontaneous, rational self-legislation to liberate humanity from the "self-imposed immaturity" of an unreflective, traditional form of life. Against the unquestioning attitude of tradition, critique strengthens our will to resist and subvert existing institutions, along with everything that is merely asserted or justified by virtue of its own existence. But in doing so, critique also undermines the comforting immediacy of shared cultural conventions and self-evident truths, opening a metaphysical void that neither science nor reason can fill.

Adorno saw that the rejection of tradition in modern progressive thought had not so much cleansed modern life of traditions as left them operating unacknowledged, sedimented in linguistic practices, intellectual dispositions, and institutions. He insisted that we should value those traditional remnants insofar as they derive their authority from a deep, subterranean respect for the past, which transcends utilitarian criteria of efficiency and instrumental rationality. At the same time, we must recognize that the modern relegation of tradition to a distant irrational past counter-posed to a self-contained rational present has divested traditions of their critical potential, turning them into an instrument of control consciously articulated by state, market, and civil society institutions to foster conformism and soften the rationalistic edges of the "totally administered society." This is the insoluble contradiction in which we find ourselves caught in the late modern age. While all programmatic appeals to the "mythical authority" of tradition entail a dangerous reactionism, the rejection of tradition leads to a naïve faith in the future that distorts our relationship to the past and belittles our ethical obligation to remember the accumulated suffering of previous generations (Adorno 1992 [1968]: 78).

The New Right's promise to move beyond this "insoluble contradiction" with a postmodern synthesis of aesthetic myth-making, "hyper-scientific" futurism, and regenerated ethno-homogenous polities is fanciful—not least because it reduces the complex realities and challenges of globalization and the "mass state" to New Class manipulation of these phenomena. Yet, it can still cause a lot of very real damage. As one observer quite rightly points out, the New Right's metapolitical efforts to disrupt and reshape the boundaries of acceptable public discourse by refunctioning many of the key metaphors and concepts of the Left "offer a broader threat to the health of the democratic public sphere by stretching its orienting categories to such a degree that they

may no longer provide a meaningfully common normative vocabulary" (Feola 2022). The move is particularly well suited to the "post-truth" political context of the twenty-first century. Whereas the mobilizing discourses of the Left locate the motives for resistance and cooperative action in reasoned collective consciousness positively connected to claims about the direction of historical developments, the discursive destabilization of the New Right promotes disengagement with universalist norms and the pragmatic style of modern governance by reflecting and cultivating prejudices and violent emotions against three main groups of social actors: migrants and minorities, liberal agents and institutions promoting an "illegitimate equality" between the "native" population and nonnationals, and the "silent majority" of the general population that resists the alignment between the collective identity of the radical Right and that of the nation as a whole.

In this framework, democratic self-determination is not valued as an effort to remove obstacles to equal access to economic and cultural resources but as a means to safeguard the privileges of the majority culture and foster cultural homogeneity against the differentiated civil society of postmodern liberalism. The aim is to render centrist political parties and reformist positions irrelevant by radicalizing the terms of public debates and polarizing the electorate around binary oppositions: those who embrace globalization versus those who want to destroy it; "ordinary" voters who want to leave the European Union versus an arrogant metropolitan elite who wants to remain; those who wish to preserve traditional communities and their sources of authority versus those who wish to abolish these arrangements. The strategy is simple but has proven incredibly effective over the past two decades. Although the implicit and explicit racism of this anti-liberal agenda has limited appeal, the critique of the ailing status quo driving this politics is gaining momentum among those who want clear and simple alternatives to our technocratic, "post-political" age of neoliberal globalization. Whatever we make of this act of "conservative resistance" from an intellectual or ethical perspective, it can no longer be ignored, dismissed, or treated with contempt.

Notes

1. The analysis presented in this chapter draws on research conducted for a broader collaborative project with Michael C. Williams on radical conservatism and global order. See especially Drolet and Williams (2018, 2020, 2021a). See also Abrahamsen et al. (2020, 2024).
2. For a sympathetic overview in the English language, see O'Meara (2013). For much more critical accounts, see Bar-On (2013); Griffin (2000).
3. Alain de Benoist gives his own account of these early years in de Benoist (2009).
4. For an early statement, see GRECE Collective (1977).
5. Some of the most well-known representatives of the Conservative Revolution include Oswald Spengler, Carl Schmitt, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Ernst Jünger, Hans Freyer, and Ernst Niekisch. For an influential overview recently published in translation by the Alt-right, see Armin Mohler (2018 [1950]).
6. Especially in the writings of Polish revolutionary Jan Waclaw Machajski (see Shatz 1999).

7. For substantive statements, see Francis (2016); Gottfried (2001); de Benoist and Champetier (2012 [1999]); Sunic (2011); Andersen (2018); Kaalep and Meister (2020).
8. On the conservative critique of containment, see Drolet and Williams (2021b).
9. For an overview, see Taylor (1998).
10. See also Spektorowski (2003); Bar-On (2008).
11. For good overviews, see Brubaker (2017); Varga and Buzagány (2022).
12. See also Adorno (2020 [1967]).

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CHAPTER 30

BORDER TRAJECTORIES

Foregrounding Durability and Friction

DEBBIE LISLE

INTRODUCTION

Borders have always been central to the work of International Political Sociology (IPS). As the conventional markers of sovereign statehood, borders animate all three trajectories of IPS: their performance constitutes the international, their transgression signifies political contestation, and their function determines sociological relations both inside and outside any demarcation. IPS research on borders has produced important critical insights that have helped to reconfigure traditional domains of International Relations (IR) such as security, diplomacy, cooperation, and conflict. By refusing the grid-like sovereign order as the "natural" architecture of the international, IPS scholars have revealed these taken-for-granted global formations as highly contested and contestable. Many IPS scholars pursue this work through a deconstructive ethos that exposes the performative nature of borders. Unlike conventional IR, which conceives of national borders as singular and fixed lines on a map, IPS understands *bordering* as a much more dynamic assembling of power, technology, bodies, practices, discourses, infrastructures, and effects—what Parker and Vaughan-Williams (2009, 2012) refer to as shifting "lines in the sand". Alongside the work of deconstruction and exposure, IPS research on borders has opened up whole new terrains of knowledge about how borders manifest themselves in multiple registers in between, underneath, and straight across the fixed grid of sovereign statehood. Indeed, one of IPS's superpowers is an ability to uncover the micropolitical practices of bordering in the most surprising places —deep inside data infrastructures, embedded in school curricula, reproduced on cinema screens, sequestered in vaccine diplomacy, and stuck to the haptic devices attempting to make our travel "seamless." Sometimes, these practices of bordering intersect in ways that amplify the grid of sovereign statehood and make national borders seem more solid, immovable, and violent. But often the process of assembling, coordinating, and implementing borders radically exceeds the sovereign order it is trying to establish and secure. IPS researchers are deeply interested in that excess.

As a distinct "IPS" approach to borders was developing, our analysis aligned with critical approaches in other disciplines by asking why some borders feel more durable,

more immovable, more violent than others and how that entrenched violence is directed toward particular populations and life worlds. What began to distinguish a particularly "IPS" approach was the claim that no matter how violent or brutal these practices might be, borders can never be understood as timeless monoliths of authority. Borders are always compromised formations—porous membranes that can never contain or arrest the multiple flows catalyzing and/or pushing against their limits. I want to argue that more than any other object of knowledge in IPS, borders have forced us, as students and scholars, to reconfigure world politics as a set of transversal forces. The concept of transversality, of course, has always animated the wider project of IPS: it is a constant reminder that the knowledges and relations constituting global affairs can never be "reduced to the ontological terrain of the state" (Huysmans and Nogueira 2016: 300; see also Baseran et al. 2017). With respect to borders, transversal analysis certainly means attuning to forces that interrupt, trouble, and disaggregate the grid of sovereign statehood—this is what is revealed by the work of deconstruction and exposure. But it also means acknowledging that transversal forces *themselves* are always mutating into new and unforeseen formations—this is what is revealed by the detailed micro-sociologies of bordering in unexpected places. For IPS scholars, borders are absolutely alive: they are dynamic sites of intensification, cross-penetration, and dispersal; they unleash variegated performances of sovereignty (sometimes hollow, sometimes violent); they are constantly reconfiguring their capacity, density, and reach; and they facilitate encounters both intense and banal. A conventional account of borders as containers of sovereign statehood—as reductive markers of inside and outside—is impotent in the face of this multiplicity of performances, which means it is incapable of tracing the asymmetrical manner in which force and violence are distributed through acts of bordering. Because IPS scholars are trained to think *in between* the international, the political, and the sociological, we are best placed to interrogate the transversal trajectories of power that are variously repelled, collected, dispersed, reconfigured, amplified, flattened, and ignored by the borders of sovereign statehood. In this chapter, I consider what makes IPS's particular approach to transversality so compelling, develop two conceptual interventions, and highlight some significant future trajectories of IPS research on borders.

Pursuing transversality: Borders, power, and resistance

As Huysmans and Noguiera rightly argue in their chapter in this volume, the transversal approaches cultivated more generally by IPS scholars complicate the usual way we think about power, resistance, and global order. This is certainly the case with respect to IPS research on borders and bordering, which absolutely aligns with Huysmans and Noguiera's preference for the "situationist" micro practices of everyday life rather than a strategic view of power hierarchies, and their encouragement of complexity,

multiplicity, and heterogeneity rather than a singular logic of opposition. I would argue that much of the critical force of IPS for nearly two decades has been to move beyond simply pointing out the asymmetrical power relations of modernity: we already *know* that global politics unfolds through identity/difference; here/there; now/then; inside/outside. What distinguishes IPS approaches is an ability to ask what is at stake in that realization: what kind of political orders, contours, and possibilities emerge once we acknowledge the constitutive force of asymmetry, violence, and limits? The real energy behind IPS scholarship has been an insistence on uncovering the heterogeneous terrain that lies on both sides of a given limit, as well as on the multiple trajectories that always transgress supposedly sacrosanct limits. For example, Didier Bigo's (2002, 2014, 2016) seminal IPS research on security and borders in Europe has systematically exposed how *in*security is reproduced through the everyday practices of border agents like customs officials, police officers, and immigration control. There is no clean and ordered Europe able to finally "sort" who can safely come in and who cannot: there are only variegated border practices that try—but always fail—to fulfil Europe's belief that its sovereign borders are secure. What distinguishes IPS scholars is an ability to think power *and* resistance together: we work out their visible and invisible intersections; we discover what makes particular iterations more forceful than others; we locate the conditions that enable resistance to established normative infrastructures (knowing that any overturning of these infrastructures will be messy, incomplete, and disappointing); and we acknowledge the moments when revolution becomes hegemonic in its own right (at which point, we join together in a heavy sigh of inevitability and get to work tracing the new formations of violence that have been unleashed).

With respect to borders and resistance, IPS scholars have done a great deal of work exposing the failures and gaps in the performance of sovereign statehood as well as highlighting the messy counter-conducts that push back, more or less effectively, against the violence of that grid. In terms of the performance of sovereign borders, many IPS scholars have exposed the haphazard, idiosyncratic, and radically uneven implementation of borders on "front-line" sites such as airports, train stations, ports, visa offices, and border check points (see e.g. Bellanova and Duez 2016; Côté-Boucher 2020; Griffiths and Repo 2018; Noori 2022). For example, when researching the everyday practices of customs agents, border guards, and immigration officers, we did not find an instrumental, sequential, or even ordered unfolding of sovereign power. Rather, we found a patchwork of tacit knowledge, human–machine relations, and informal practices that kept the border operational but by no means as efficient or objective as promised (Lisle and Bourne 2019; see also Bigo 2014; Leese 2015; Lisle 2018). IPS scholars have also examined the messy contestation of sovereign borders on both a mass scale (e.g. Ryan's (2019) work on the aesthetics of protest) and in more intimate registers (e.g. Topak's (2017) work on migrant hunger strikers in Greece). Just as the implementation of sovereign borders is uneven in its intent, scale, and effectiveness, so too are the pushbacks. For example, IPS scholars examining migration,

citizenship, and borders offer important reminders of the multiplicity of counter-conducts—not just the noisy, visible, and coordinated protests against deportation but also the micropolitical refusals enacted by migrants themselves as they navigate the security–humanitarian infrastructures trying to manage them (Dadusc 2019; Pallister-Wilkins 2022; Squire 2017, 2020; Stierl 2019).

While I think the concept of transversality does a great deal of productive work for IPS scholars critically examining the implementation of, and resistance to, sovereign borders, I think we need to pay more attention to the turbulence, contingency, and messiness of borderwork. IPS has done a lot of excellent work critiquing the sovereign order, but often that critique can itself become ossified when we allow ourselves to be seduced by supposedly uncontested norms such as justice, righteousness, and revolution. I don't want to underplay the enormous pull of those normative imaginaries, or to suggest there is some pure position outside of their seduction. But I want to argue that IPS has the capacity to produce more collaborative, creative, and experimental forms of solidarity that keep us attuned to the messy terrain of power and resistance, especially when it comes to borders. Towards the end of Huysmans' and Noguiera's (this volume) reconfiguration of resistance, they encourage us to move away from "a static spatial framework and linear temporalities to an emphasis on movement and the ephemeral." This is a necessary and exciting research trajectory, but I'm keen to push it beyond a focus on mobility and transience. What interests me are concepts that enable IPS scholars to understand borders as constantly shifting infrastructures of authority that always exceed their function of simply enacting a pre-given and supposedly uncontested sovereign order (Lisle 2021). Whether intensifying into a spectacle of violence and exclusion or fracturing into a messy patchwork of smooth flows and haphazard blockages, borders should always be understood as *in process*. The challenge for IPS scholars is how to avoid static concepts that reify into singular logics of inclusion/exclusion. In other words, we need to *start* from a position of multiplicity and pay close attention to how plural trajectories mutate, intensify, and change.

Beyond "lines in the sand": Multiplicity, durability, and contestation

IPS scholars have done a lot of work reorienting our understanding of borders away from the governance of territory and toward the governance of mobility and circulation. The power of sovereign statehood is not just a geopolitical arrangement to counter threatening territories "over there"; it is also an arrangement to detect, identify, survey, police, detain, or deport mobile bodies and objects that can enter sovereign space and circulate through it. This is why IPS scholars focus on borders as active *sorting* mechanisms that constantly delineate between welcoming mobilities that are safe, preferred, and productive and deterring mobilities that are dangerous, unwanted, and

burdensome. Here, we can see how IPS research on borders is a direct descendant of critical IR from the late 1990s that explained sovereignty through logics of inside/outside, identity/difference, friend/enemy (Walker 1993; Connolly 2002; Campbell 1998). These ideas were mobilized by early voices in Critical Border Studies, who used the idea of performativity to contest the assumption that sovereign borders are immoveable or natural: 'Reconceptualizing borders as a set of performances injects movement, dynamism and fluidity into the study of what are otherwise often taken to be static entities' (Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2012: 729; see also Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2009; Salter 2011, 2012). While I think the move to theorize borders with respect to mobility is extremely fruitful, I'm not convinced that understanding borders as "ephemeral" enables us to track the current reconfigurations of power and resistance in ways that foreground the micro practices and multiplicities Huysmans and Noguiera insist upon. Certainly, performativity provides a helpful architecture for ephemerality because it locates our analysis in practice, lived experience, and encounter. While I appreciate the dynamic nature of both ephemerality and performativity, there is a risk that they render borders as superficial and often capricious markers of difference (they are *only* performances, after all). By insisting on the constitutive mutability of borders in order to foreground opportunities and spaces for resistance, I worry that we sometimes lose focus on how the sustained violence of territorial sovereignty continues to make itself felt in new configurations. I want to be clear that sovereign borders *are* indeed performances, but they are also materializations of violence that have become even more robust in the face of global flows and hypermobility. For me, IPS research on borders is at its best when it keeps *both* aspects in the foreground of our analysis: the performative *and* the enduring, the ephemeral *and* the material. Our transdisciplinary starting point between the international, political, and sociological is crucial here: it never allows us to become complacent, or even comfortable, in one analytical pathway.

To help encourage this in-between approach, I want to argue that *durability* is a more helpful formulation that captures both the ephemerality and materiality of borders: it helps us understand how multiple forces emerge, stick together, stabilize, and persist over time. Durability certainly allows us to foreground the processual nature of bordering and the contingency at the heart of all modalities of inclusion and exclusion. But it also allows us to take account of the enduring violence that repeats itself through seemingly permanent markers of sovereign territory. As I have argued elsewhere (Lisle 2021: 442),

> Durable arrangements of subjects, objects, infrastructures, discourses and imaginaries are never given for all time, but instead come together (i.e. they entangle and assemble), they endure over a period of time, and then they dissipate. Certainly, particular arrangements can stick tightly together and maintain themselves over long periods of time such that they can appear to be natural, given and timeless. But thinking through durability prevents these emergent entanglements from solidifying into a static hegemonic formation that sits in opposition to counter-hegemonic forces. Indeed, durability keeps the contingency, instability and open-endedness of these arrangements in play, which means that even the most intractable formations are always available for transformation, mutation and adaptation.

Borders are powerful coagulations of multiple forces: they are sticky infrastructures that enact permanence (often in violent ways) so as to hide their constitutive contingency. Durability gives us a helpful way to keep that contingency in mind when we are tracking heterogeneous formations of power and resistance at border sites. While we may hear echoes of Gramsci's hegemony/counter-hegemony, and even Foucault's conduct/counter-conduct, thinking through durability prevents us from reproducing singular logics of power/resistance. Instead, it helps us attune ourselves more carefully to the multiple formations of transversality at the heart of IPS by insisting on two analytical moves. First, any configuration of power, authority, and violence—including its attending modes of resistance—must be disaggregated into multiplicities of force that unfold in asymmetric ways. Power and resistance are never absolute: they are always heterogenous, plurivocal, and unevenly distributed. Second, those multiplicities are never static—they must be understood as always in process and therefore always open to mutation, transformation, and reordering. Durability, then, requires a kind of bifurcated thinking: an ability to expose the detailed pluralities of power as they take hold *at the same time* as insisting on power's radical contestability.

Within such a dynamic conceptual landscape, it is difficult to figure out the politics at stake. What IPS research has done very well is track new and emerging border durabilities in which micropolitical decisions about inclusion/exclusion are expanding into new domains and intensifying upon new bodies, objects, spaces, and rhythms. For me, some of the most innovative current IPS research tracks how the policing of sovereign borders with respect to irregular migration is expanding and intensifying through the forces of humanitarianism. Although security and humanitarianism are usually configured as oppositional forces—one policing cross-border flows, the other extending aid across borders—IPS research has revealed a "care/control nexus" in which humanitarian efforts to care for migrant bodies are folded into the security efforts trying to police and detain them (Andersson 2017). Walters (2010) provides a helpful genealogy of the birth of the humanitarian border that encourages us to think of practices of aid, assistance, and rescue as deeply entwined with practices of security, policing,

detainment, and deportation. Drawing from anthropological critiques of humanitarianism (Fassin 2010, 2011; Ticktin 2016), and critical migration scholarship more generally (de Genova 2017; Garelli and Tazzioli 2013; Huysmans 2006; Mitchell, Jones, and Fluri 2020; Nyers and Rygiel 2012), IPS scholars have explored how practices of humanitarian care toward irregular migrants are complicit in extending and reproducing the security apparatus of the sovereign order. As Pallister-Wilkins (2017: 19) argues, "humanitarian intervention concerned with saving lives both masks the violence of the border that renders people vulnerable in the first instance and masks the intimate relationship practices of rescue have with processes of capture more traditionally associated with border policing" (see also Pallister-Wilkins 2022) This complicity is perhaps understandable in official bodies like the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), which have always bolstered the sovereign order, but it applies as well to both large, independent nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) like *Médecines sans Frontières* and small, grassroots organizations working on the front line (Frowd 2018, 2022; Pallister Wilkins 2019; Sandri and Bugoni 2018). IPS scholarship is crucial here not only because it insists on the multiplicity of actors assembled into this durable care/control nexus but also because it shows us how those actors assemble, connect, reconfigure, and dissipate. For example, in the context of search and rescue on the Mediterranean, Stierl's work (2018, 2019, 2021) shows the diversity of those operating on the sea, from FRONTEX and national police forces, Coast Guard and Navy, to the multiple private organizations and groups seeking to save lives at sea. Rather than position these two groups in opposition to each other, Stierl shows how the moral zeal of "doing good" by saving lives can often blind humanitarian actors to the pernicious forms of surveillance, policing, incarceration, and exploitation in which they are complicit and that await migrants once they are rescued. Importantly, Djistelbloem and van der Veer (2021) argue that the durability of the care/control nexus in Europe is derived precisely from its mobility—its capacity to quickly assemble and reassemble its constituent objects, subjects, technologies, and practices across different sites.

IPS research on the care/control nexus does not claim that the humanitarian industry has suddenly been "securitized" through official speech acts and policy decisions. Rather, it traces the multiple forces (e.g. discursive, material, historical, affective, technological) that repeatedly produce irregular migrants as "objects of concern" from terrorist threats to pitiable victims. Central to this work is an account of how migrant agency is being produced and reconfigured by the humanitarian border. Conceptually, this draws on a long-standing debate between Agamben's figuration of the migrant as "bare life" (i.e. thoroughly objectified and excluded within a security apparatus) and autonomous migration scholars, who foreground the active and plural expressions of migrant agency within even the most oppressive structures (Nyers 2015; Owens 2009; Garelli and Tazzioli 2013). What we witnessed in the intensification of irregular migration into Europe in 2015–2016 was a powerful—and durable—crisis framing in which

migrants became silent figures to be pitied by distant media publics, cared for by compassionate humanitarians, and spoken for by a range of European experts (Chouliaraki and Georgiou 2017; Jeandesboz and Pallister-Wilkins 2016; Pallister-Wilkins 2022). Dominant accounts of the crisis configured the migrant as a passive and abject "blank screen" upon which the expertise of humanitarians could be enacted through a variety of interventions ranging from the distant charity of donors to the intimate treatment by public health professionals. The migrant had no agency apart from "a suffering body in need," incapable of managing their own health, well-being, and futurity. Here, we see a coming together of biopolitics and necro-politics in a way that prefigures migrants as somewhere in between life and death: they are unable to "properly" care for themselves, which means they are kept alive—minimally so—through public health interventions, but they are given no resources to actively build a life in Europe (Davies, Isakgee, and Dhesi 2017; Mbembe 2019: 75; Minca et al. 2021). What we have learned from IPS scholars is that it is not enough to simply document how a dominant narrative of crisis strips migrants of their agency; it is also necessary to (i) expose the new, and often very uneven, formations of violence unleashed by discourses of "crisis" and "emergency" and (ii) call attention to the multiple acts of dissent and refusal through which migrants push back against the "refugee crisis script" that renders them abject (Ataç, Rygiel, and Stierl 2017; Tazzioli, Garelli, and De Genova 2018; Topak 2017; Stierl 2018). These active contestations take many forms, from the quiet refusals of humanitarian assistance to the noisy demonstrations against deportation (Johnson 2015; Monforte 2016; Ozguc 2020; Skleparis 2017; Walters 2015). All this is to say that IPS research examining the complex entanglements between humanitarianism, security, and borders exemplifies what I mean by thinking through durability. It foregrounds the heterogeneity and mutability of *both* the sovereign forces at work in migration and the push-backs from migrants, activists, and allies. A singular binary logic of power/resistance is unable to expose the messy, fractured, and overlapping character of these formations. What IPS offers are detailed accounts of the plural, transversal, and transgressive forces that both reinforce and unravel durable instantiations of humanitarian borders.

Polymorphous borders: Heterogeneity and the potentials of friction

IPS research on borders has certainly drawn from, and helped to develop, the field of Critical Border Studies that emerged in the 2000s, specifically the claim that borders are much more like shifting "lines in the sand" (Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2009). Here, the concept of "borderscapes" offers a much thicker conception of borders by acknowledging the dispersal of the border and its constant performance of debordering and rebordering. Reflecting on the critical potential of the concept, Brambilla (2015:

18) has argued that borderscapes offer "a space for liberating political imagination from the burden of the territorialist imperative while opening up spaces within which the organization of new forms of the political and the social become possible" (see also Brambilla, Laine, and Bocchi 2015; Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007). To that, of course, IPS scholars added "the international" and put this much broader and more plural understanding of borders to work in important areas of research such as airports (Adey 2009; Salter 2007, 2008); the practices of border guards (Doty 2007; Neal 2009; Walters 2006); early biometric border technologies (Amoore 2006; Epstein 2007; Muller 2010); and the relationship between borders, sovereignty, and the exception (Baseran 2008; Bigo 2002; Vaughan-Williams 2008). What differentiated IPS research on borders in these early years was an acknowledgement of the risks of broadening "borderscapes" too far. Borders are emphatically *not* everywhere. To suggest as much produces two related difficulties: (i) that the reach of the sovereign state is now overwhelming and (ii) that such an overdetermined landscape of authority does not allow for push-back, dissent, and refusal.

As IPS research on borders developed, it began to reconfigure the original energy behind borderscapes and align itself more explicitly with critical geography's understanding of borders as lively, contingent, and turbulent spaces. Arguing against the ubiquity of borders but acknowledging their dispersed character, Burridge et al. (2017: 241) "advocate for a polymorphous approach to the spaces of bordering and migration control, that refuses a homogenizing border logic but that illuminates the fractured, partial ways that difference and territoriality are practiced." This, I think, speaks directly to Huysmans and Noguiera's focus on micro practices and multiplicities, but in a way that helps us refuse the "homogenizing" seductions of a singular power/resistance logic. While the concept of borderscape does allow for analysis that goes beyond "lines in the sand," it loses precision when trying to account for the differential and dispersed formations of power, authority, and violence. For me, a polymorphous approach is more helpful because it deliberately foregrounds the uneven texture, depth, and range of borders in a way that provides more room to track new and familiar formations of inclusion/exclusion as they arise. While borderscapes can flatten and homogenize, a polymorphous approach encourages us to analyze the heterogeneous, asymmetrical, and dispersed formations of power and resistance that never obey a singular logic. For example, recent research on the intersections of borders, migration, and COVID-19 certainly shows that Fortress Europe's preferred logic of inclusion/exclusion has been amplified by a public health emergency (Aradau and Tazzioli 2021). But this is by no means a uniform process. Indeed, the governance of migrant mobility across borders during the COVID-19 pandemic has been interrupted, contested, and reordered by a variety of contradictory forces, including the irresolvable tension between humanitarian inclusion (i.e. migrants are part of "our" public vaccination program) and national security practices (i.e. migrants are both "unsafe" *and* "unhygienic" bodies that should be pushed back outside Europe's borders) (De Genova 2022; Tazzioli and Stierl 2021).

Thinking of borders as polymorphous sites allows us to understand them as simultaneously durable formations that intensify through repetitive force *and* unstable formations that are constantly mutating, reconfiguring, and evolving. The challenge for IPS scholars is trying to keep the durability and instability of sovereign borders in play at all times so that the analysis is not seduced into either a flattened account of hegemony or an apolitical description of border ephemeralities. Here, it is important to think about the concepts and methods that allow us to explore the micro practices of transversality that arise in this tension. I have found the concept of "friction" enormously productive in terms of the way it enables the analysis to move back and forth between durability and instability. Drawing from the work of Tsing (2005) and Cresswell (2014), I deploy a concept of "friction" (Lisle 2021: 44; see also Lisle 2016) in which

> differently rough-edged entities emerge at different speeds, and their entwinings are necessarily marked by more or less friction, more or less stickiness. Some entities stubbornly hold their form no matter what relations are on offer, others are marked by porosity and a willingness to entangle, enmesh and mutate into something new.

What I like about the concept of friction is that it does not enforce a telos of resolution. Too often, we are compelled to strengthen and amplify the seemingly totalizing hegemonies of our time (e.g. the nation state, capital, technology, modernity) by either assimilating friction in a way that makes hegemony more productive, or minimalizing it into an unthreatening nuisance. Refusing those lures demands that we inhabit friction more fully in order to foreground the dynamic, unstable, and deeply uneven topography of totalizing hegemonies—especially those that feel entrenched and immovable. As Tsing (2005: 6) rightly argues, that dynamism does not permit a singular logic of power/resistance: "Friction is not a synonym for resistance. Hegemony is made as well as unmade with friction."

Within IPS, many scholars are attuning themselves to the multiple frictions that emerge as borders try—and often fail—to enact simple inside/outside decisions. For example, Côté-Boucher's (2020) study of Canadian border and customs officials shows us that these figures do not unreflexively or mechanically enforce the security wishes of the state against bodies who either comply or resist. Rather, the actual work of bordering is shaped by multiple frictions between entrenched Union politics, changing data initiatives, professional norms, new surveillance technologies, and dominant formations of masculinity. We saw a similar kind of heterogeneity when examining the work of borders and customs officials in European airports (Lisle and Bourne 2019). Here, everyday practices were constituted by multiple frictions as human agents tried to locate decision-making authority in either their human intuition, skills and training, or the technologies they relied on to make in/out decisions (see also Allen and Volmer 201

8; Whyte 2020). A more systematic development of border friction emerges in Aradau's (2022) account of the controversies that have arisen as the European Union (EU) increasingly relies on algorithmic governance to control mobility into and out of its territory. For example, she locates friction in the experimental nature of registering irregular migrants with digital devices; in the powerful disruptive work of errors and fakes (Aradau and Perret 2022; Aradau and Blanke 2021); and in the resistive capacities of hacking, reverse engineering, and controversy mapping (Aradau, Blanke, and Greenway 2019). The ethical orientation of this work is not about resolving friction—quite the opposite. It is about creating more opportunities to examine friction as an expression of the constitutive instability of borders. In other words, friction allows Aradau and her collaborators to *stay with the trouble* (Haraway 2016)—to pursue a detailed analysis of the terrain between the durability of borders and their radical contingency.

As a consequence of attuning to the frictions of bordering, IPS scholars have had to reimagine their assumptions about who, and what, enacts borders. This is more than just claiming that borders are spatially dispersed, or that the "line in the sand" is thicker and more volatile than we imagined. Rather, it is a profound reckoning with the role, agency, and force of nonhuman materials in any act of bordering. In contesting a dominant anthropocentric frame, IPS scholars do not relegate technology (e.g. scanners) and other nonhuman actors (e.g. sniffer dogs) to inert objects that are used instrumentally by the humans in charge of making "good" (i.e. objective, efficient, expert) in/out decisions. More-than-human approaches understand that bordering is enacted by an assemblage of distributed agency in which humans are not the only actors exerting force in border scenarios. Drawing largely from Actor-network theory (ANT) and Science, Technology, and Society (STS), IPS scholars are learning to examine the *entanglements* between humans (e.g. border guards, managers, tourists, passengers, migrants) and nonhuman agents (e.g. scanners, sniffer dogs, luggage belts, e-gates, databases, algorithms) that coordinate—or not—in the practice of bordering. Indeed, it is precisely in the process of trying to coordinate all these disparate actors that we see the multiple frictions at work when a supposedly simple in/out border decision is crafted.

Amoore's (2006: 337) early work on post 9/11 bordering outlined two central developments that radically shifted conventional understandings of who, and what, enacts borders: (i) "the turn to digital technologies, data integration and managerial expertise in the politics of border management" and (ii) "the exercise of biopower such that the body itself is inscribed with, and demarcates, a continual crossing of multiple encoded borders—social, legal, gendered, racialized and so on." IPS scholars like Amoore have argued powerfully that the human body—the locus for modern subjectivity, citizenship, and rights—is increasingly dispersed at the border through a variety of biometric technologies and modes of surveillance. This shift has opened a great deal of analytical space to explore how technology's entrenchment of familiar logics of inclusion/exclusion at the border is never as smooth as promised and, more

often than not, is marked by error, contradiction, and failure. This rather bumpy landscape of bordering is exemplified by IPS scholars who show us how human bodies are simultaneously "dissected" by biometric technologies to identify risk, but also recentered as the final arbiter of identity that "does not lie" (Aas 2006; Amoore and Hall 2009; Epstein 2007; Bellanova and Fuster 2013; van der Ploeg 2005; Kloppenburg and van der Ploeg 2020). By exposing a central tension over whether the human body is—or is not—"coherent" at the border, this work provides rich detail about the many frictions that arise when human bodies are entangled with nonhuman actors during practices of bordering. What this work has exposed is the vast and often turbulent political landscape underscoring any in/out border decision. Bordering is never a smooth experience: it is a heterogenous and polymorphous process marked by uneven mobilizations of power, differential speeds, and often idiosyncratic attachments between human and nonhuman actors. IPS scholars are leading the way in exposing the uneven human/nonhuman entanglements of bordering: we have found new ways to document the multiple frictions at work in bordering processes without losing sight of what is at stake politically. What specific objects, bodies, life worlds, and populations are being targeted? How are new forms of violence and exclusion being mobilized and justified? Where are the opportunities for contestation?

Along with critical colleagues in geography, anthropology, sociology, history, criminology, and law, IPS scholars are well placed to interrogate the pernicious, extensive, and often invisible formations of power that are called forth in the coordination of humans and nonhumans at the spatiotemporally distributed border. We have developed a particular expertise in attending to formations of power and violence (especially in relation to security) in ways that always leave room for disruption, fracture, mutation, and reconfiguration. Two areas of IPS research stand out in this regard. First, IPS scholars addressing recent intensifications of irregular migration have brought together insights from STS and autonomous migration to expose new assemblages of techno-scientific control. Here, we see an expansive modality of ordering in which nonhuman actors from sophisticated technologies (e.g. databases, algorithms, Eurodac machines, smart phones) to mundane materialities (e.g. life jackets, boats, back packs) are enrolled into dehumanizing forms of surveillance, exclusion, detention, incarceration, and deportation. IPS scholars insist on making irregular migrants visible *within* the techno-scientific systems put in place to control them, including EU information systems (Glouftsios 2021; Glouftsios and Scheel 2021); modes of digitization (Amelung et al. 2020; Aradau 2022; Scheel 2023); and, more recently, vaccination programs (Tazzioli and Stierl 2021). Second, IPS scholars have been doing the difficult work of exposing the violence inherent in the supposedly "neutral" algorithms used to make in/out border decisions. As Bellanova et al. (2021: 121) argue, IPS is an ideal intellectual space to examine "how algorithmic systems feed (into) specific forms of violence, and how they justify violent actions or redefine what forms of violence are deemed legitimate." This is not only about identifying the errors

that emerge in the application of an algorithm but also about reverse engineering to examine the assumptions baked into algorithms as they are being built (e.g. through training data) and problematizing the increasingly autonomous character of machine learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI). This research has prompted important questions about authority and control: If borders are being increasingly managed by nonhuman actors capable of processing information beyond the limits of human cognition and consciousness, can we say that border decisions are even being made by humans anymore? Have we delegated our capacity for discretion to machines (Hall 2017)? Here, Amoore's recent work (2021) formulates highly astute questions about technology and accountability by showing how machine learning is radically reconfiguring our understanding of borders: "Deep learning involves much more than the deployment of technologies *at* the border, and is reordering what the border means, how the boundaries of political community can be imagined."

Transversal horizons: Future directions in IPS borders research

As the rich research referenced in this chapter illustrates, IPS scholars do not understand borders as simple mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. By all means, borders include and exclude—of course, they do—but that logic is always unevenly executed and open to many forms of contestation. IPS scholars have excelled at working in between these two countervailing forces, calling attention to the repeated forms of violence enacted by the sovereign order at the same time as documenting the many inadequacies, limits, and failures of that execution. This research has contributed to wider debates on bordering by foregrounding how those asymmetries manifest in the global register where the sovereign order is enacted and resisted in multiple localities. As Huysmans and Noguiera (2016; in this volume) argue, logics of power/resistance are a central concern for IPS scholars analyzing the transversal forces of the international. For me, that logic is a necessary starting point, but in this chapter I have tried to show how that logic is never singular or static but is, instead, irrevocably heterogenous and mutable. Through a more polymorphous approach to bordering, we are able to foreground mobilizations of power at the same time as exposing their openness to contestation. In an effort to develop this distinctly "IPS" approach, I have suggested durability and friction as two concepts that are able to keep us analytically focused as we explore that in-between location. For me, these concepts are enormously helpful when trying to honor the empirical richness and material complexity of borders and border crossings in the global register. What excites me most about IPS research on borders are the many active conversations currently developing in collaboration with other disciplines and scholarly traditions. Because IPS requires a kind of intellectual agility to remain in between the international, the political, and the sociological, we are

well positioned to take these conversations forward. Three areas in particular strike me as significant as we navigate the multiple forms of quick and slow violence currently shaping the global register.

First, although IPS scholars were central in arguing that borders research should concentrate on mobility rather than territoriality, I don't think this conversation is over yet. Too often, we get seduced back into framing the problem as one of mobility versus immobility, as if there are pure conditions of smooth, fast, and frictionless movement across borders versus idle, inactive, and static captivity within them. As Adey (2006, 2017) has rightly argued, we need to think of mobility in *relational* terms to understand its differential speeds, scales, and effects. A good example of research that exposes the heterogeneity of mobility is recent work on the carceral circuit of migration management, which shows that migrants are not "stuck" (and therefore silent, passive, or forgotten) in detention centers, asylum hotels, or Hot Spots (Moran, Gill, and Conlan 2016; Martin 2021; Mountz and Lloyd 2014; Stierl 2021). State forces and international organizations often move migrants between different carceral nodes in a global migration circuit (Martin 2019); their condition of "waiting" is not the dead time of immobility but is, instead, filled with multiple mobilities as they prepare their cases, undertake caring duties, pursue informal labor, or volunteer (Jacobsen, Karlsen, and Khosravi 2020); and the recent intensifications of migration into Europe and at the US–Mexican border have produced transversal migrant activism, protest, and solidarity that pushes back against increasingly violent forms of border security (Atac, Rygiel, and Stierl 2017). This work is an important reminder to theorize borders in terms of circulation rather than capture—to think in terms of relative mobility even in situations where incarceration seems to arrest all forms of movement, agency, and dissent.

Second, discourses of human rights and citizenship, while crucial in exposing the violence of borders, can often obscure what actually happens in the process of bordering. As I have argued here, some of the most innovative IPS research questions the anthropocentrism of rights-based discourses and extends relational approaches to account for the materiality of borders. Central to this work is a claim that in/out border decisions are never crafted by humans alone—there are always nonhuman actors in the loop that exert agency and force. However, the challenge for this "more-than-human" approach is to expose how multiple registers intersect at borders in ways that make human/nonhuman entanglements politically meaningful. Too often, this work (including my own) lapses into a descriptive mode that flattens the complexity of borders into preferred attachments between the material and the corporeal. What needs more attention are the wider imaginary, discursive, and cultural forces that, by extending and amplifying these human/nonhuman attachments, end up reproducing familiar asymmetries of race, gender, class, sexuality, ablism, etc. For me, materially oriented research needs to do more to tell us why human/nonhuman entanglements matter in the process of bordering; what logics of power constitute those entanglements; and how attending to these logics will help us foreground wider issues of accountability, politics,

and ethics. A good example of materially oriented *and* politically attuned research reimagines borders as *infrastructures* in order to signal that the seemingly immovable materiality of mobility management is also unstable, contingent, and open to contestation. Here, the challenge is to make visible the violence, exclusion, and dispossession that border infrastructures reproduce even as these material formations—and the entanglements they construct with human actors—are transforming, adapting, and mutating. For example, a number of IPS scholars examining the large-scale IT systems governing Europe's borders have shown that far from delivering precision, objectivity, and efficiency, these massive digital infrastructures increase categories of suspicion and criminalization, obscure "behind-the-scenes" human labor, and reproduce racial logics that target migrant populations (Bellanova and Glouftsios 2022; Djistelbloem and van der Veer 2021; Glouftsios 2021; Leese, Noori, and Scheel 2022; Noori 2022; Tsianos and Custer 2016). This work shows us how nonhuman actors involved in bordering (e.g. Europe's digital border infrastructures) exert force in a way that has serious consequences for particular human populations (e.g. migrants who are increasingly criminalized). In my view, IPS research that centers nonhuman actors, material forms, and relevant human/nonhuman entanglements in its analysis of borders needs to pose more difficult questions for itself about the accountability of multiple actors (especially nonhuman ones), the role of the public in addressing border controversies, and the way that automation is changing the conventional ethical coordinates of bordering.

Finally, more conceptual development is needed to understand borders and bordering as formations that are always *in process*. Too often, our critiques of border violence, while well intentioned, are seduced by the normative promise of resolution that always restores the sovereign order. It is as if we believe that if we just make our critique more rhetorically forceful, more empirically comprehensive, or more legible to policymakers, then all these exclusionary border practices we have uncovered will somehow end. This, of course, is not the case. If anything, we have seen a systematic expansion of exclusionary bordering with the erection of border walls, the externalization and "off-shoring" of border management, and a deeper penetration of border surveillance into everyday life. The reason why I prefer concepts like durability and friction is that they help us refuse the normative seductions of resolution. Durability insists on a much longer temporal arc in order to show us that sovereign borders may shift and mutate—sometimes in extreme and violent ways—but they do not disappear. Theorizing borders through durability situates the analysis in the *longue durée* of modernity—a temporality in which subjectivity, territory, history, and cosmology are all constituted by enduring logics of inclusion/exclusion. The crucial point for IPS research, as Walker (1993) has long argued, is that these logics are *irresolvable*. This is why we need concepts like friction so that our critical analysis is able to proceed even as multiple formations of power/resistance are overturning, fracturing, and undoing themselves. Friction never resolves itself in favor of either power or resistance: it

simply reconfigures itself into new and different forms of friction—more or less intense, more or less sticky, more or less tightly coupled. Understanding borders as always in the process of becoming durable formations but never quite achieving that desire, keeps their openness and contestability in the foreground. By all means, this contestability can generate multiple forms of resistance, but never in a way that resolves the frictions produced by bordering. The challenge for IPS scholars is to always hold their analysis in between the countervailing forces of power and resistance—to focus on the *processual* nature of bordering without the normative fantasy that its inherent frictions can be resolved.

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CHAPTER 31

INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY AND RESISTANCE

Whither Revolution?

ERIC SELBIN

INTRODUCTION

International Political Sociology (IPS) does not stand for Irritating Political Scientists; that's just a bonus. Political sociologists are, to some extent, the bane of political scientists (perhaps sociologists too), who are too often locked into a (too) carefully curated and circumscribed world of "power." Political sociologists (seek to) shed those chains (both fetters and linkages) and, situated at the nexus of an array of disciplines and subdisciplines, programs and projects, have a world to win, or at least explore and explicate. If political sociology is commonly understood as working the state/society nexus, consider Huysmans and Nogueira's aperçu that "IPS emerges from and as a lineage of critical thought engaged in the problematization of the international" (this volume). To this end, they add, "IPS investigates the indeterminate and contingent nature of boundaries that enclose the political space of sovereign states and posit the international system as an all-encompassing field of power" (Huysmans and Nogueira, this volume). Thus, even as "it distances itself from political sociologies concerned with how the dynamic interactions between society and state shape modern social formations" (Huysmans and Nogueira, this volume), IPS is mediated and mitigated by a kindred constituency: Andean cosmologies (pluriverses), Asian-Pacific Islander studies, Black studies, feminist studies, gender and women's studies, Latin American and Border studies, Latinx studies, more-than-human perspectives, queer studies, queer feminism, race and ethnicity studies, subaltern studies, etc. IPS is a wide and complicated world, the very complexity of which is presumably, and presumptuously, what a handbook and chapter such as this are supposed to make legible.

As befits Huysmans and Nogueira's vision of IPS "as a political sociology of the transversal" (this volume), this chapter will "fit" here inelegantly. If it "works," we (the dream is to engage you in this process in the pages ahead) will find ourselves in Tsing's "zone of awkward engagement," "where words mean something different across a divide … These zones … are transient; they arise out of encounters and interactions. They reappear in new places with changing events" (Tsing 2005: xi). These zones

emerge via Tsing's metaphor of the friction ("awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference," 2005: 4) attendant to the interconnections between processes and actors that interact "across difference and distance" (2005: 2). These zones are also a place of entanglement, "reflecting mutuality, reciprocity, and common composition" (Selbin 2023a: 224), which provides access to a place and space where people share the imaginaries that reflect the lived realities they draw on to construct their worlds. Entanglement is a concept derived from histories that recognize "the intertwined 'processes of constituting one another' " (Gould 2007: 766) and "reflects the entanglement between observer, angle and object" (Bauck and Meier 2015). Hence what Gould (2007: 766) describes as the " 'mutual influencing,' 'reciprocal or asymmetric perceptions,' and the intertwined 'processes of constituting one another.' "[1] It is in this space of awkward engagement, entanglement, and imaginary where we will assemble. Taking note of some of the cracks, crevices, and contingencies, with Ritter's call for our analyses to evolve (2019) well in mind, we will together muddle towards some conception of revolution, resistance, and IPS.

About that space where we are headed and ...

It might be expedient to invoke the words attributed to Assassin leader Hassan-i Sabbāh (حسن صباح) as his last: "Nothing is true, everything is permitted." A fair warning, if not particularly helpful. More helpful, some 850 years after Hassan died, is poet and musician Patti Smith's proclamation that she hasn't "fucked much with the past, But I've fucked plenty with the future" (Smith 1973: 193; listen, also, to Smith 1978). Here, today, us, we will make meaning together, perhaps, if it all breaks right, under conditions of our own choosing.

Speaking of which, I feel compelled to note in anything I write these days my positionality as a eurowhite, cis-gendered male, Global North scholar who has not yet managed to find a way to avoid much of the seemingly inevitable and inescapable markings of the capitalist-inflected English language, redolent of racist, sexist, classist, gendered patriarchy. Similarly, you will see here the struggle for how to "best" refer to the actually existing world; as aware (I hope) as a person of my privilege and position can be of the matters these elide and complicate, I have opted for the terms "Global South" and "Global North" (following Nayak and Selbin 2010: 167–168, n 3, now guided by Sajed 2020 and others). In both instances, and others you will no doubt detect, we are disciplined by our disciplines, our states, our societies, and our cultures. The academy has been dominated by white views and white voices, conditioned by white ideologies. Such thinking inexorably reproduces the past(s), clouds the present(s), and precludes the future(s). This particular rootedness, in its most arboreal sense, limits us and reinforces the insufferable eurowhiteness and maleness of much of the academy

and our fields; it is stultifying. I am under no illusion that we can remedy this here, but we can, and should, name it and resist it.

Cracks: Great ruptures … and lesser ones that are no less real

Without belaboring well-known and easily accessible details, the French revolutionaries ushered in the nineteenth century with demands for liberty, equality, and freedom in 1789; Haiti in 1804 proved freedom and justice belong to everyone, everywhere; Mexico in 1910–1920 was the twentieth century's first great social upheaval; China in 1949 made revolution globaland Cuba in 1959 brought it into the modern world, while Grenada, Iran, and Nicaragua in 1979 offer a coda of sorts to 1789; some argue Iran or Mexico's modern-day Zapatistas (1994) bring it to the post-modern. If the generation since seems less epic than these "big, large, huge" revolutionary processes, a "new age of revolution" (Goldstone 2016: xxxii) seems afoot and the current "little revolutionary age" no less profound or meaningful for those involved; Belarus, Hong Kong, Myanmar, Rojava, Sri Lanka, and Sudan are among places and spaces where revolutionary situations seem stirring.[2]

Each of these cases represents many things, and their confines (if there can be such) contain multitudes. Here, I hope they function as cracks, as entry points for interlopers such as ourselves, as we begin to consider and reconsider what we know and what we don't about resistance, about revolution, and about all manner of related matters. How do we know what we know, what does it mean that we know what we know, how do we know what we don't know, what does it mean that we don't know what we don't know, and how do we even begin to figure out what it is we don't know we don't know and the ramifications and implications thereof?

A coupla-three digressions

Huysmans and Nogueira (this volume) offer us a rich starting place, with apologies for exactly the sort of arboreal formulation they seek to resist or at least rework. Taking them at their word(s) and reading them as both prompt and provocation, three digressions, for want of a better word, seem pertinent. These in-text asides are neither detours nor bagatelle, and they are germane to what follows; each could well merit its own chapter.

First is the problem of resistance. Perspectives on resistance abound, yet much like revolution, resistance is used casually and constantly with little attention to circumstances.[3] Often invoked in "an unfocused way," resistance is offered as more of "a political stance … [than] an analytical concept," Hollander and Einwohner suggest, while identifying two "core elements: action and opposition" (2004: 547, 538). Lahiri-

Dutt maps four criteria of authentic resistance in the "mainstream literature": "it must be collective and organized rather than private and unorganized; it must be principled and selfless rather than opportunistic and selfish; it must have revolutionary consequences; and it must negate rather than accept the basis of domination" (Lahiri-Dutt 2003: 13). Still, Scott's (1985: 11) contention that resistance draws primarily from everyday material goals rather than revolutionary consciousness is persuasive, and his warning against overestimating the possibilities of "everyday resistance" valuable.

Resistance may also be signified by people's refusal to cooperate with or support regimes or leaders. Such behavior seems a piece of what Kampwirth (2002: 11) refers to as a "tradition of resistance" which "plant[s] seeds that … germinate many years later, when the structural, ideological, and political conditions [are] right." Women often play a particularly crucial role in this process (Selbin 2010: 11); Parelli describes "an ant-like resistance, made of patience, words, gestures, and especially marked by the absence of silence. Women talked, women criticized, women protested, as they had always done, as they still do … At a time when silence was ordered, they spoke" (Parelli 1989: 104–105). Patience, adhering to the letter of the law but not the spirit ("*obedezco pero no cumplo*"), and a willingness to speak often form a basis of resistance.

The second digression reflects on Huysmans and Nogueira's deft framing of IPS as emerging "from and as a lineage of critical thought engaged in the problematization of the international" and hence distancing of themselves from "the dynamic interactions between society and state [that] shape modern social formations" (Huysmans and Nogueira, this volume). They seek the acentric, the transversal. Guattari articulated the "transversal" as a way past failed hierarchical control networks and the logic of horizontal control. Rather than an arboreal (centrist) or polycentric approach, a-centric (transversal) constellations "which do not move on the basis of predetermined strands and channels from one point to another, but right through the points in new directions" (Raunig 2007: 205). The possibilities are amazing … and intimidating; "instead of six degrees of separation, we have billions of degrees of connectedness."[4] And the need to resist universalizing impulses.

Digression the last: cracks and crevices and folds. Huysmans and Nogueira (this volume) mention IPS searching for the political "in the movement of fragments, in crevasses and fractured terrains, in the folds and lines that escape the pull of stratification along levels of organization of political space such as society–state–international–global," adding that

> the terrains of life that this IPS seeks to understand are essentially cracked; they are defined through the crevasses and folds rather than through their relation to order or unity that smoothen over the cracks into an integrated plane. Fragmentation is thus taken as the condition of existence of social and political relations.

As they are no doubt aware, they echo in ways that matter, and may yet matter more, Hegel's (1956: 61) claim that many "revolutions, nomadic wanderings, and … strangest

mutations" are not in the history books,"[5] a claim that may no longer hold thanks to the multitude of dissertations produced over the past 50 years.

Aporia and agonistes: Another aside

Aporia is generally understood to mean a sort of puzzle or conundrum, though it can also refer to something being difficult or, per Derrida, "undecidability." All of these seem apt, reflecting the challenge of not just thinking into and through revolution but doing so in the context of IPS and situating it within and without resistance. And, hence, agonistes struggle. Resistance and revolution are both in most every sense, arboreal, rhizomic, and transversal. Allusive, elusive, illusive, dangerously close to being empty signifiers. Yet, however one imagines and frames their world and the work we consider here, resistance and revolution *are*. Moreover, as I have argued elsewhere, revolution in particular is often a rare moment when a state, a society, a culture is open and if not necessarily legible or fully accessible, at least approachable for interlopers: the notion of zones of awkward engagement and inevitable and effervescent moments, entanglements, and such that are inevitable, if at times inexpressible, and the inescapable imaginary from which everyday, ordinary people's conceptions and formulations spring.

Handbooks, as noted above, are meant to make matters more legible, accessible. They are a species or genre of guidebooks, themselves a type of annotated map, and we probably need not dwell over much on what mapping is about except to note, since it will be relevant later, that the mapping that grows along with the emergence of what was once unironically called "Western Civilization" was/is about control, domination, and (the possibilities of) expropriation and exploitation. For now, note the effort to avoid tracing but rather to map, a process that inescapably includes brush clearing and, hence, familiar faces and tropes.

On the passage of a few people through a rather brief moment in time: Defining revolution

Huysmans and Nogueira's employment/deployment of the Situationists, and particularly their recuperation of the less familiar (to most) Vaneigemist position (Huysmans and Nogueira, this volume) is whence the subtitle above derives (a *dérive*, in honor of the Situs, if you will). Here, I will simply quickly rehearse a few of those who, in an arguably brief moment (perhaps 100 years, but for our purposes here, less than half that), passed their thoughts on revolution to us.

Revolution seems to be back in vogue; "the phenomenon of revolution has new life in the social sciences" (Beck 2018: 134; see also e.g. Brandon, Jafari, and Müller 2021;

Desai and Heller 2020; Kapustin 2019). Having recently belabored the state of theories of revolution at length (Selbin 2022, 2023b), I will try to be brief and hope the Situ's notion of *dérive* is of some use, breaking out of the predictable and the monotonous.[6] Yet, the power and parsimony of Goldstone's generational formulation of revolutionary scholarship (Goldstone 1980, 1982, 2001) reflects careful and close consideration and, critiques aside, the genealogy, honed alongside the other key transitional theorists (Foran 1993, 2005: 8–14; Lawson 2016, 2019a: 55–59), remains useful, not to ignore the oversights and omissions (Beck 2020; Beck and Ritter 2021) sacrificed (arguably) to a compelling narrative.

The short version is a first generation of what Goldstone dubs "the natural-history school" (1982: 189), of whom Brinton (1938) is the exemplar. A second sought broader patterns (Huntington 1968; Gurr 1970; Tilly 1975, 1978) and a third characterized as structuralist amassed individual behavior situated in historically grounded processes (Moore 1966; Russell 1974; Trimberger 1978). Skocpol (1979) is the third generation's paradigmatic statement, refined by Goldstone (1991) and Goodwin (2001). The fourth generation (proposed by Foran 1993, codified by Goldstone 2001, embedded by Lawson 2016), is, per Beck (2020: 564), a "basket of approaches" unified primarily by a call for the people, ideology, culture, and more the structuralist approach lacks (largely "additive," Lawson 2016: 107, but with "advances," Lawson 2019a: 60). Assuming that this fourth generation "coheres" (but see Beck 2020: 565), it would seem largely done, Skocpol looming, yet refined in crucial ways by Foran (but see 2005: 7) and Goldstone (2014), and perhaps now put to bed by Lawson (2019a). *Bona fides* presumably intact, shall we continue?[7]

Skocpol (1979: 4) defined (social) revolution as the "rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures … accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below" in a contemporaneous and mutually reinforcing fashion. Goldstone wedded her approach to Foran and others to bring in aspects such as culture and ideology: "the forcible overthrow of a government through mass mobilization (whether military or civilian or both) in the name of social justice, to create new political institutions" (Goldstone 2014: 4; Foran 2005). Lawson summarized this fourth generation as understanding revolution "as conjunctural amalgams of systemic crisis, structural opening, and collective action, which arise from an intersection of international, economic, political, and symbolic factors" (Lawson 2016: 106), which resonates with my version: "revolution is socio-political, economic, and symbolic upheaval meant to produce striking, broad, and meaningful change in the material and ideological conditions of people's everyday lives; real people in the real world making real decisions that really matter" (Selbin 2023b: 392). Most usefully, Lawson has proffered either the fourth generation's ultimate statement or limned the coming fifth: revolution as "collective mobilisation that attempts to quickly and forcibly overthrow an existing regime in order to transform political, economic, and symbolic

relations" (Lawson 2019a: 5). Lawson's (2019a: 14–15) intersocial, historicized, multifaceted (pithily rendered elsewhere as "revolution, therefore, is not a single thing," Lawson 2019b: 1153) offers us an inclusive, powerful academic tool with much to recommend it. Is this generational formulation still helpful? I am agnostic, but Beck and Ritter (2021) think not. I am particularly curious here, though, about the utility for those committed to, or interested in, the possibilities that seem on offer from IPS.

Bearing in mind Huysmans and Nogueira's conviction that "IPS emerges from and as a lineage of critical thought" and their invocation of the transversal—beyond arboreal models suggested by genealogies or the rhizomic; we are in/with the acentric—it is useful to consider revolution as a "social fact," dependent on human consensus and consciousness to infuse them with meaning. Viewed this way, it is possible to discern a "folksonomy" of revolution, a collective, user-generated, nonhierarchical, bottom-up taxonomy, produced primarily by people seeking to change their worlds but also those who are resisting. If this is "right," narrower definitions of revolution inevitably fail us, and we need to follow those actively engaged, in several senses, in making revolution in the small worlds that are their everyday worlds. Then revolution reads as social upheaval meant to produce striking, broad, meaningful change in the material and ideological conditions of people's everyday lives. This resonates with the (common) sense that we know it when we see it, which is not to suggest revolution is anything and everything or that academic debates over "revolution" are of no matter (an excellent précis can be found in Beck and Ritter 2021) but to suggest that we need to engage with those seeking to change the material and ideological conditions of their everyday lives, those affected by revolution. It is in this entangled zone of awkward engagement (Tsing 2005: xi), along with people's imaginaries of the (im)possible, that we may find a space and place to recuperate and reconsider revolution in ways less rooted, if I may, in History (history is another matter),[8] in method (historical, behavioral, structural, and so on), or in the material conditions or the mode of production. Revolutionary imaginaries, the resulting friction, and entangled histories offer a way.

Revolution in the real world

Revolution is not something people contemplate casually but rather with varying degrees of trepidation and anxiety (Selbin 2009: 22). At the same time, it is associated, for many, with struggles for food, land, peace, justice, access to opportunities and resources, a home, health care, education; a moment raising not fear but immense, endless possibility/ies. As Holmes (2014: 382) astutely points out, "it is never just rage against injustice that leads to mass uprisings, but also the millenarian belief in something better." Indeed, the premise and the promise of Delroy Wilson's (1971) memorable phrase that "better must come" (Selbin 2010: 13; Cordes and Selbin 2019; Selbin 2023b; Beck et al. 2022: 260).

The 1959 Cuban Revolution popularized and romanticized revolution in ways that echo. If it is important not to romanticize revolution (Selbin 2010: 56),[9] it also seems churlish to be "overly concerned with leaving behind one's objectivity, worrying about romanticizing revolutionary violence" (Foran 2003: 282). Whether they "should" or not, people romanticize revolution (Selbin 2010: 84–88) in ways that enable and ennoble themselves and the process. Mexico's "modern" Zapatistas named themselves after Mexican Revolutionary Emiliano Zapata to evoke the romanticism of revolution and evince commitment.

Huysmans and Nogueira (this volume) note that

> as we focus on transversality instead of scales and on folds and entanglements instead of oppositions, the analysis moves from a more static spatial framework and linear temporalities to an emphasis on movement and the ephemeral. To put it differently, once we let go of the oppositional and reactive conceptions of resistance, the problem becomes how to locate and position forces in specific situated struggles.

To reframe this in ways they may resist, Huysmans and Nogueira's positional and situational call evokes and invokes real people in the real world making real choices (such as they are) that really matter (with apologies to any post-modernists in the crowd with us today).

We most commonly understood the world as fundamentally a place of human action, habitually in the Global North, but in interesting and important ways in the Global South as well; recent work on cosmopraxis (Querejazu 2021; Tickner and Querejazu 2021), the pluriverse (Escobar 2018), and more-than-human (Müller 2021) offer other tantalizing glimpses. Years ago, Nayak and I posed a question that inspired spirited responses: "Do you ever wonder if the peasants, farmers, oppressed women, child soldiers, sick and dying, poor—or others you study, categorize, and write about—are sitting around somewhere wondering about you …?" (Nayak and Selbin 2010: 3). Are they subjecting our perhaps puzzling analyses to the calming order of their world(s)? None of this is to deny or denigrate the role and place of structures or the spiritual/mystic. Few would wholeheartedly reject the profoundly dialectical relationship between individual and collective will or historical circumstances in any given event or processes. The scope for human action depends on historically specific conditions and people's actions confront certain limits arguably demarcated by a (certain) range of possibilities. But the interplay of circumstance and action is where people make history; options are considered, choices (if there are any) are made,[10] and paths are pursued. Meaningful and satisfactory explorations and explications lie with our ability to take people, society, states, culture, ideology, and more into our consideration(s).

Crevices: Little cracks and little ruptures

The world has always been rife with fascinating movements in culture and politics strewn about that have, in traditional mainstream conceptions of power, leadership, recognized events, etc. (i.e. History as conventionally re/told), barely left a trace; footnotes, if they are noted at all, in the History we tell and hence live our lives by. Consciously and deliberately not in the History books, these complicated, convoluted, complex, problematic efforts—implying an intentionality I am not certain was always evident to the participants—are to create zones within which people could/can realize their private hopes and dreams and desires in public fora. Driven by the dynamic of hope, such movements also create and embody the space—spatial, temporal, and perhaps most importantly psychological—and offer the opportunity for counter-hegemonic activities. This, then, is a history of moments, of *processes* rather than (static) events, within which people seek to gain control over the material and ideological conditions of their everyday lives. What could be more radical than that?

It may seem specious to liken crevices to the potentially earthshaking processes invoked above, often construed as efforts at fundamental transformation not just of a society or state but of everyday "ordinary" people out to change the world. And yet, for those involved, it may be every bit as much so … and the history may linger in ways that are often hard to imagine and harder yet to codify. The 1871 Paris Commune is a useful example, arguably influencing ensuing European politics for 100 years. But others have haunted too: Berlin 1918 and 1919 Soviets in Munich and Hungary (and, uhm, Limerick …); the 1919–1921 anarchist Ukraine; the Chinese revolution from 1925, but especially Shanghai; the 1927 Guangzhou "Three-Day Soviet" ("the Paris Commune of the East") and the Hunan Autumn Harvest Uprising. Sandino's 1926–1934 nationalist rebellion in Nicaragua produced the 1960–1980s revolutionaries who, if only in name, rule today and Martí's 1932 Marxist revolutionary vision in 1932 El Salvador produced a three-day worker–peasant soviet in Tacuba) whose namesakes and spirit inspire one of the country's main political parties today. The 1936–1937 Spanish Revolution was invoked by Spain's 2011–2015 *indignados* and animates Catalonia still; and the Naxalbari subdivision of the Darjeeling district of West Bengal in 1967 remains an influential insurgency across India's "Red Corridor."

Are these crevices cracks? Are they the more obscure and ephemeral contingencies to come? You tell me. What each of these cases reflects is an instance where people sought to take control of their lives, to make their own history, to realize their dreams, and hopes, and desires in the only way(s) they knew how. Here again, then, are times and spaces and places we may, within the very real limitations and constraints we are bound by, seek to interact with, to try and understand people engaged in creating the very situations we want to attend to. In the process, they offer us the opportunity to explore what revolution and resistance may mean to us.

Circling around, firing off exploratory beams

To cop a familiar line, what is to be done? Bey (1991: 93), described his efforts to if not exactly define perhaps designate the Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ) as follows: "I have deliberately refrained from defining the TAZ—I circle around the subject, firing off exploratory beams. In the end the TAZ is almost self-explanatory. If the phrase became current it would be understood without difficulty … understood in action."[11] Parse this for yourself and share your thoughts with the group, at least figuratively. For me, what Bey's intervention provides is a place from which to think and interrogate our "exploratory beams" as well as the crucial three words following his ellipses: "understood in action." What exploratory beams do we have at our disposal, how do we make them legible, and what are the implications for IPS of "understood in action."

Revolution needs to be resituated and (re)considered in an entangled, figurative, zone of awkward engagement(s) (Selbin 2023a: 219, 2023b: 391). This is consonant with Huysmans and Nogueira's (this volume) formulation that they "use the concept of the fold to articulate the way in which power struggles express variable intensities in the entanglement of differentiated forces." Sensitive to "changing connections" (Selbin 2023a: 219, 2023b: 391) and eliding the slicing and dicing that forestalls understanding, they seek to "transgress in the movement of combinations through which they come to be organised as relatively stable relations that produce mutations, transformations and, possibly, creation" (Selbin 2023a: 219, 2023b: 391). Thence the (deeply) engrained generational analysis and the question of how our analyses might be evolving alongside or outside of that, and perhaps beyond definitions at all. Beck rightly points out that "there seems to be almost as many definitions of revolution as there are scholars in the field" (2020: 565); perhaps, as Bukovansky (personal correspondence, 2021) has astutely suggested, what we seek is less a definition and more akin to a threshold.

Revolution is an intriguing and challenging construction of how can we change the world with the radical proposition that we can act to change the material and ideological conditions of our everyday lives in the small worlds that are our everyday worlds. Such explorations necessarily begin with people and the world(s) in which they live. By whatever means we access those worlds—culture, ideology, networks, stories in their myriad forms—that is where we might begin. However difficult opening revolution to the everyday and everyone is, it seems fruitful.

The folksonomic approach mentioned above would embrace people's complexity while avoiding the hierarchical/patriarchal baggage inherent in taxonomic classifications. People's imaginaries are socially, and crucially, collectively constructed and reflect human agency, collective action, ideology, and culture. Hence, people's revolutionary imaginaries provide the means and methods to struggle for control of the material and ideological conditions of their everyday lives in a world inimical to their interests. In often daring (if subtle) acts of bricolage, people's verve and élan, the creation, in Huysmans and Nogueira's depiction, is the creativity with which they weave together the ways and means to encounter, negotiate, and (re)create

their world(s) into the places they desire and where they can realize who they want to be (Selbin 2010: 75–76). This is no mean feat, and it is incumbent on us not to overwrite what we learn in/to our image(s), our narrative(s), as we seek to understand revolutionary activity. It is also essential to be cognizant that we will encounter a mix of trepidation, apprehension, even memories of terror with nostalgia, romanticism, and palpable sense of "possibilism." And so here we are.

Which is where? To some extent betwixt and between, in "liminal" (Turner 1979) spaces that are not places as such, but where one is "physically and magico-religiously in a special situation for a certain length of time … waver[ing] between two worlds" (Van Gennep 1960: 18). Liminality is a murky condition of "ambiguity and paradox" and is primarily a period of "the unstructured (which is at once destructured and prestructured)"; these exist "as a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise" (Turner 1979: 236). One passes through limens and reaches not simply the other side but the point(s) of creativity. By interrogating and interpolating revolutionary imaginaries, the assemblages that result, and the predictable friction(s),[12] and hence zones of awkward engagement they generate and make legible, and situating these entangled histories, we can find a way to proceed.

There are other ways to think about this, and watching and trying to understand as millions of people seek to change the material and ideological conditions of their everyday lives, it seems to me that there is a widely held sense that we know revolution when we see it. Certainly, millions of people believe, deeply, that they have witnessed, participated in, and lived into and through revolution. Foran (2019: 112) recently called for a shift in terminology:

> In the 21st Century, the *movements for radical social change (a term more apt for this century's great social movements than revolution*) has itself changed, as activists, reformers, dreamers, and revolutionaries globally have increasingly pursued non-violent paths to a better world, intending to live and act as they would like that world to be [emphases added].

Movements for radical social change (MFRSC) might help us reframe, refocus, rethink. But previous such efforts, Eckstein's case for "internal war" (1964, 1965) or Walton's similarly strong case for "revolt" (1984) have yielded paltry results, have often been co-opted, and have done little to meaningfully change the conversation or our considerations.[13] Guattari and Rolnik's (2008: 258) peculiar claim that revolution as a term is "broken and worn out" seems less wrong then irrelevant. Despite its diverse character and the ambiguity with which it has been used, too many still find revolution too useful to dispense with. Revolution seems the *nom de guerre*, *c'est la vie*.

The call here resonates somewhat with Olsson and Maleševic's (2022: 15) recent call for more attention to "the micro-dynamics of revolution." As here, they recognize the power and place of "large-scale macro-historical processes" (Olsson and Maleševic 2022: 15), yet these are relatively easy to map and model and even, to some extent (however poorly) base predictions on. In contrast, the types of factors discussed here

for individuals and inevitable unpredictable aspects that accompany these processes may be our most important units of analysis. It is everyday people—us—who make revolution and whose world(s) must be explored. Here, with them, their emotions, their beliefs, their unpredictability, their visions, are where the answers lie. We are drawn to metanarratives that help make sense of the complexity of our lives; Markoff (1997: 1139) reminds us of the "need to study the messy details of historical processes and not just the grand trends." These micro-level moments, often focused on matters of everyday life, have weighty implications (on everyday resistance, see Guillaume and Lemay-Hébert, this volume).

Contingency/ies: The imperceptible ruptures … if they are ruptures at all

These "imperceptible" ruptures are obviously highly visible to those who live them, and the "fact" we know about them is, in and of itself, indicative. The 1911 anarchist Republic of Baja California (Mexico); the 1917 multi-ethnic, multi-class, socialist Green Corn Rebellion in rural Oklahoma (USA); small and scattered 1918–1919 soviets strewn about Europe, particularly in south France and Ireland, many lasting mere days; the brief Kronstadt Rebellion of anarchist (or Social Revolutionary) sailors, soldiers, and citizens in nascent Soviet Russia in March 1921; the weeks of the Women's War in Nigeria in November–December 1929; Chile's 1932 evanescent twelve-day "República Socialista de Chile" led by General Marmaduke Groves; if obscure, Curaçao's 1969 Frente Obrero y Liberacion uprising, better known than the 1980 People's Republic of Greenwich Town in Jamaica, a footnote at best in the country it occurred. Yet, each of these (and literally thousands and thousands of more such moments) have happened, are happening, will happen. People saying, loudly, "We are here and we matter." And that "better must come."

It is important to note that these are the cases "we" know of. Those that are accessible to Global North scholars, almost always in translation (at best a mean and, in a profound sense, impossible task: see Benjamin 1999; Selbin 2010: 36–38 is a sketch). There are myriad instances of resistance, rebellion, or revolution that elude those of us embedded in Global North, male, linear, progressivist approaches to knowledge. If these specific moments have been, by and large, crushed and are thus invisible, they may reappear elsewhere and "elsewhen" (Bey 1991: 101), at times with strong connections, occasionally with (much) more tenuous ones. Sometimes, their evaporation may simply reflect a decision to flee, strategically or otherwise, in the face of power and privilege, with real or imagined or even no plans to fight another day.

These instances are, in a profound sense, part of our common human heritage and ecology; if nations are peoples, these are the wealth of nations. Such embers may be carried along, nurtured, and rekindled, a politics of possibility (Shannon Mariotti,

personal correspondence 2022). Consider the 1914 *settimana rossa* (red week) workers' general strike in Ancona, Italy, which led to communities declaring themselves "communes" or "workers" republics' in conscious evocation of Paris 1871, which in turn inspired factory occupations and worker self-management during the 1919–1920 *biennio rosso* (two red years), the reaction from which was the 1921–1922 proto-fascist *biennio nero* (two black years), which led to Italy's fascist takeover and, decades later the 1968–1970 *autunno caldo* (hot autumn), which spawned extreme violence on the far-right and far-left, *anni di piombo* (the years of lead) from 1968 to 1988. Perhaps closer to our subject matter, consider Situationist *éminence grise* Guy Debord's 1979 estimation, well after the Situs in 1968 seemed within a hair's breadth of coming to power in France appeared to have disappeared, that "one can say that the SI is like radioactivity: one speaks little of it, but one detects traces of it almost everywhere, and it lasts a long time" (Debord 2006): a long time with a beautifully unclear and wildly inconsistent meaning.

Opting for possibilities, for a chance to change their lives, a surprising number of people, in a surprising number of places, over a surprising span of time(s)—for as long as we know of—have chosen to engage in behavior that, despite their brevity, influence us yet. Such movements—those listed above, those that precede them, those that are much more recent, those unfolding around us as we speak—leave their traces in how we live: the way(s) we walk and talk, the voice(s) we speak in, the manner(s) in which we dream, in our very conceptions of what is and is not possible.

When the Situationists meet Deleuze and Guattari at/in/on the fold (at/in/of the revolution): The problem(atique) of resistance … and let's be honest, more questions than answers

Huysmans and Nogueira's shrewd deployment of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), invocation of the Situationists (in a deucedly clever move, the lesser known but vital Vaneigemist (1967) position[14]—revolution of everyday life indeed; well played), and the a-centric transversal is devastating in the best possible sense. Forget clearing brush. They have leveled the landscape and propose a fresh start (which, of course, is not actually a beginning, but you know that); we are in their debt. The IPS position is one that is at minimum amenable to the liberation of everyday life, a means and method to negate the traditional lens, through which the spectacle views revolution. And they do so at a moment where there is considerable confusion about what exactly revolution and revolutions are in the contemporary world.

IPS in Huysmans and Nogueira's compelling (re)formulation moves us away from the state and society binary ("i.e. pre-given structural and institutional entities," this volume) to incorporate other aspects and more elements: "struggle; politics on the line; transversal politics; politics in-between" (Montesinos and Rosenow 2016). This shift

opens us up to the critical practices necessarily found in "specific and diffuse struggles, disputes, conflicts" (Montesinos and Rosenow 2016). The vision is not to build a "better" world but "to make sense of the construction of new material realities where they actually operate" (Montesinos and Rosenow 2016). This is a tall order.

To the extent that it is possible, then, we are called upon here to look not from above, nor from below, but alongside, putting ourselves into the mix at least figuratively and perhaps literally. This means not "simply" interrogating matters from "outside," seeking to step away from the History we help produce and our conventional assumptions about history, and from the "inside," meaning we must seek alternative sources that are rarely called, relied upon, or readily revealed. In 1995, a Grenadian doctor who been active in the country's short-lived (1979–1983) revolution was pressed on why he had avoided being interviewed and had waited until nearly the end of my lengthy stay. He smiled and replied that his mother had cautioned him, "Better to keep it quiet, child—if they have to ask, they don't need to know" (Selbin 2010: 165). She's not wrong.

All of this is a problem, but perhaps less so if we refashion it as a problematique. Saleha and Worrallb (2015: 75) define a problematique as expressing "the notion of a problem which is both continuous and critical for an entity and … demonstrates the interrelationship of the issues." Their invocation (Saleha and Worrallb 2015: 75) of Warfield and Perino's definition seems particularly apt: "one component of a larger system for exploring and managing complexity" (Warfield and Perino 1999: 221). Revolution is a problematique, one that may be explored as entanglements alive with friction and zones of awkward engagement, and imaginaries to guide us if we can, as much as is possible, leave our colonial/imperial utopian fantasies behind, or at least beside, and honor the complicated, contradictory "realities" of actual lived experiences in all their complexity.

The sort of individual and collective behavior we social scientists "code" as revolution often reflects (and inevitably refracts) people's conception(s) of their actions as part and parcel of some long process of struggle that most societies hold in their collective memory/ies. If these collective memories are often focused on the "big, huge, large" aspects, the unspoken and the informal are there as well, reflecting what is deftly described as a "community's understanding of their … origins, purpose, development, and group life" (K'Meyer 1996: 219). What constitutes revolution is difficult at any time and in any case, but as suggested at various points above, we often know it when we see it. The far greater challenge is how we recognize it when we do not.

Revolution is, in some sense, everywhere and nowhere, like Schrödinger's cat neither dead nor alive, waiting to be killed by the rise of the putatively new democratic/electoral authoritarianism or animated yet again as people have done countless times, in innumerable places, over the centuries. If we're going to lean into physics, maybe Heisenberg's uncertainty principle is more apt: we can't really know the position with any accuracy, and the more we do, the less we know. There are so many (im)possibilities, paths taken and not, and here is where the transversal may serve

us best as we seek—if we seek—patterns and processes Markoff has aptly labeled "moments of social creativity" (Markoff 1997: 1139). It is these places and spaces and (im)possibilities where people and society are particularly open to those of us fascinated by such episodes. People's belief in (im)possibilities and conviction in their inherent abilities to reshape themselves and their world is boundless. Consciousness and intentionality may not always be evident to all involved, given the varied dynamics. But in the process, in these moments, they create and embody the place—spatial, temporal, and psychological—and opportunity for counter-hegemonic activities and control over the material and ideological conditions of their everyday lives. Banded together to reassert control, resist destruction, and/or restructure their culture in the face of domination, people have made a legacy of opportunities, possibilities, to change their lives and those of others that influence us still. They were, are, and will be—that does not change. Ritter (2019) thoughtfully suggests it is time for our analyses to evolve. He's not wrong.

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Notes

1. Gould (2007: 766 fn 10) notes that "entangled history is an inexact translation of (and slight variation on) *histoire croisée*" and lays out in detail what she is drawing on.
2. In Lawson's compelling formulation, "contemporary revolutions owe more to the legacy of 1905, 1848, and 1776 than they do to 1789 or 1917" (2019a: 226); I would add 1968. It may yet be that 2010–2013/2014 in and around the Mediterranean and influenced elsewhere merit mention.
3. See, among many, Scott (1985, 1990); Groves and Chang (1999); Turiel (2003); Higgins (2000); Eckstein (2001); Zibechi (2005); Picq (2018: 63–95); Anderl et al. (2019); Mosinger et al. (2021); Wood (2019); Hollander and Einwohner (2004); Gadinger, Smith Ochoa, and Yildiz (2019).
4. A phrase borrowed shamelessly out of context from Gleick (2013: 9).
5. These records, he continues, have not "accidentally perished; rather, because they were not possible, do we find them wanting." Deleuze and Parnet (1983: 84) suggests that, lacking the presence, the rhythm, of "History," real things happen outside its scope: "the great ruptures and oppositions are always negotiable, but not the little cracks and imperceptible ruptures."
6. Don't hold your breath and *nota bene*, *hic sunt citationes*: the sin (venial, one hopes) of honorific citing (Beck 2020: 20–21) lurks; *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*.
7. Allinson (2019) posits an evanescent fifth-generation focused on nonviolence and regime change and a processual aspect he finds missing in the fourth, which has come and gone, Ritter (2015) its paradigmatic corpse (but see Beck 2020: 585). Abrams (2019: 378) reads this as the "death throes" of the failed fourth and proposes what a "true fifth generation" might look like.

8. Historicizing revolution in the abstract seems fraught and "instances" (somewhat) "simple" history/ies can be cobbled together, particularly in Brecht's sense, as "a way of seeing" (Diamond 1988: 87). Goldstone's generational formulation is a handy ordering of an intellectual process.
9. A charge Grinin and Korotayev (2022: 9) make about my work and a caution I heard some 25 years ago from Goldfrank about various scholars; see also his admonishment "envisioning and thereby encouraging armed revolutions is irresponsible nostalgia" (Goldfrank 1999: 1596).
10. Goodwin's (2001) invocation of Trotsky seems apt: "People do not make revolution eagerly any more than they do war … A revolution takes place only when there is no other way out."
11. TAZs may be thought of as invisible, fluid, free utopian spaces of liberation and possibility that, by definition (despite Bey's desire not to define them), must flee when recognized.
12. Grinin and Korotayev (2022: 4) use a geological metaphor that relies on friction as well.
13. Other efforts have sought common ground between the study of social revolutions, on the one hand, and phenomena such as coups d'etat (Trimberger 1978), political violence (Feierabend, Feierabend, and Gurr 1972), or social movements (Wickham-Crowley 1989), on the other.
14. Translated into English as *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (1979), Vaneigem's book was titled *Traité du savoir-vivre à l'usage des jeunes générations* (1967).

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PART VI

POWER

CHAPTER 32

POWER IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION

International Political Sociology (IPS) is not an organic or unique outgrowth of previous traditions but originates at the confluence of certain research streams that sprang out of International Relations (IR) from the 1980s. Three developments have been particularly important for power analysis. First, some International Political Economy scholars insisted that power needed to be thought of in a less behavioral and agent-oriented manner, working around various conceptions of "structural power." This opened up for post-Marxist approaches but also for historical and economic sociology out of the Weberian tradition. Then the sociological and linguistic turn, often linked to constructivism and post-structuralism, added problematiques about the social constitution of identities and (hence) hierarchies, for instance through habitual or ritualized mobilization of existing biases in discursive practices (for an early proposal how these two strands could be coherently combined, see Guzzini 1993). Finally, mainly through the reception of Foucauldian analysis (also in/through gender studies in IR), social and explanatory theory linked up with political theory proper about the very nature of power, here often understood in terms of government and political order in the constitution of modernity and the modern self.

The present chapter is dedicated to showing how these power concepts have informed IPS and been informed by it. In IPS, social and political theory meet also through the concept of power. While doing so, they rely on three established findings in concept analysis. First, concepts are theory-dependent. The way we conceptualize power varies according to underlying meta-theoretical assumptions. As long as we have no universal social theory, if that were ever possible, also concepts of power cannot be reduced to one. This gives rise to conceptual perspectivism (Guzzini 1993). Second, a concept of power is an important component of, but no shorthand for, a theory of power. Power plays very different roles if embedded in a system theory (e.g. Parsons 1963 or Luhmann 1988 [1975]), a theory of action (e.g. rational choice), a theory of social recognition (e.g. Mead 1934 or Goffman 1963), or a theory of domination (e.g. Bourdieu 2001), to name a few of our distinctive social theories. Indeed, in some theories, a variety of

power concepts are put in relation to each other, when, for example, influence is seen as the main constitutive factor of government (as in Dahl 2005 [1961]) or hegemony the main factor in understanding individual autonomy (as in Lukes 1974). The analysis of power is hence more than just its concept, both because the concept derives its meaning from theories and because there is a whole family of power concepts that those theories may put into relation. Finally, and relatedly, the analysis of power serves different purposes and in different domains (Guzzini 2007, 2013a: 8–11). Some theories wish to understand agency, others hierarchy, others political order, others the "self." These purposes, and the quest for appropriate concepts of power, are not reducible to each other. Indeed, as Peter Morriss (1987) had early admonished, we could have spared ourselves much useless discussion about power if we only refrained from universalizing concepts of power across domains or purposes or applied a single and specific purpose to just any concept of power.

Our chapter will proceed in three steps. It will first take stock of the different ways power has been re-conceptualized in IR ever since the 1980s and our methodology for these conceptualizations has shifted. In a second step, we show how the commitment to an intersubjective, relational, and process ontology (Guzzini 2017a) has affected our social theories and the embedded concepts of power. We will exemplify this by presenting the research agendas on recognition, technologies of government, and the performative analysis of power. Finally, we take seriously the link between political and social theory and develop the ways in which the ontological shifts informed political theories of power in IPS, here exemplified through different research agendas in the understanding of resistance.

Power and the sociological turn of IR

To understand the renewed interest in the very concept of power that hit IR in the 1980s, it is important to see the nature and limits of pre-existing conceptualizations. For its important role in political realism, the conceptualization of power was closely connected to this school of thought. In classical realism, the essence of politics is "the aspiration for power over men," the *animus dominandi* (Morgenthau 1946: 45). The lust for power is pursued in a necessarily violent game: "Even where legal relations hide relations of power, power is to be understood in terms of violence, actual and potential; and potential violence tends here [SG: in world politics] always to turn into actual warfare" (Morgenthau 1946: 50). In Morgenthau's explanatory theory, the national interest plays a crucial role, since it is the junction between the ontologically posited drives, which constitute the logic of politics, and the utilitarian theory of action, which explains political behavior. And the national interest is defined in terms of power (Morgenthau 1960: 5). It is that which makes power move from an ontological anchor to the prime explanatory factor: power as an innate drive for behavior (of A) becomes the

primary cause in which A affects B's behavior in a social relation. In the absence of a sanctioning body with the monopoly of the legitimate means of violence (called anarchy), states cannot but have the maximization of their power as their immediate aim, whatever else they may aspire to (see the verbatim passages in Morgenthau 1945: 14, 1946: 195). Since war is the default position, or at least an unavoidable component of international affairs, military prowess (i.e. the proven record of military power broadly understood as all that is needed to sustain a war effort, including, for instance, economy, demography, or social morale, but only as a means for war) is the main measuring rod of international rank. The resulting international system is characterized by an always precarious balance of great powers whose best moral bet is to rely on an ethics of responsibility.

Much has been written to show that realists have a more sophisticated understanding of power politics than this rather quick presentation (e.g. Schmidt 2005; Wohlforth 2003). For instance, after having defined the balance of power as an automatic mechanism, Morgenthau clearly saw that, far from being automatic, it relied on a common understanding of its principles to function in the first place (Morgenthau 1948: 163–165). This led to Inis Claude's (1989) wry remark that realists had still not decided whether the balance of power was the prerequisite of international order or whether international order was the prerequisite for a functioning balance of power. But for the sake of this chapter, this debate is secondary. The point is not to find passages in realist writings that give credence to ethical or norm-inspired and ideational factors; these there surely are. But precisely for this lacking overall consistency, when push comes to shove, both classical and neo-realism derive their explanatory determinacy from the automatic and materialist take on which Waltz (1979) was more honest and more consistent than Morgenthau (for a detailed critique of the many contradictions in Morgenthau's conceptualization of power, see Guzzini 2020).

The underlying concept of power in these earlier theories in IR is hence mainly agential, material, and behavioral. It is not stretching it too much to say that the main theorization of power in IR was influenced by Robert Dahl's reformulation of Max Weber's definition where A gets B to do something, he/she would not have otherwise done. Power was understood as influence with visible behavioral effects. Whereas Weber found such a concept of power amorphous and not of much use, while preferring his concept of *Herrschaft* for social science research (Weber 1980: 28–29; see also the discussion in Guzzini 2017b). Robert Dahl (1957) took it up, made it famous, and its general vision informed many textbooks in IR (e.g. Deutsch 1968: 22; Holsti 1967: 208).

Although Dahl's concept of power has been criticized since the 1960s in the social sciences, the predominance of agential and materialist approaches and the slightly delayed but powerful entrance of behaviorism in IR made the latter a latecomer in the critique of such power conceptualization. By the late 1970s, a series of conceptual developments appeared. Although often of some prominence, the quite challenging

theoretical implications were neglected by the discipline. But it was exactly those that were to become important for power analysis in IPS.

Embedding relations: Relational power

The first major critique was levelled by David Baldwin, one of the surprisingly few scholars who actually engaged with the concept of power. He insisted that the underlying concept of power in IR was not too much Dahl but too little. Dahl insisted that power is a relational concept, not to be confused with a property concept, where power would be reduced to resources or even capacities. Sticking to Dahl's substitution of power with influence, Baldwin castigated the many "paradoxes of unrealized power" that had informed post-Vietnam analysis in the United States (Baldwin 1979: 163). If power is influence, then it cannot fail. Resolving the paradox by "conversion failures" made power analysis unfalsifiable, since a country could be considered in principle more powerful when it won—except when it lost. And hence, Baldwin insisted on the need of a previous "policy-contingency framework," a historically situated analysis of the means, social norms, values, and preferences of all actors involved in the relation, that would establish which capacities would indeed be influential (Baldwin 1979: 165, 1985: 285). Threatening to kill a suicide candidate turns out to be an invitation, no threat (Bachrach and Baratz 1970: 20–21). Thus, power emerges out of the relation, not from resources, even if the latter play a role. In general terms, this implied that the default research path would be case and relation specific. This position was criticized by Keohane (1986: 187) for lacking generalizability. In return, Baldwin minced no words when he wrote that "it is time to recognise that the notion of a single overall international power structure unrelated to any particular issue area is based on a concept of power that is virtually meaningless" (Baldwin 1979: 193).

This said, Baldwin did not draw all the implications of this relational turn. He stuck to Dahl's causal conception where, in the end, B's (changed) behavior is caused by A's (changed) behavior (see also Baldwin 2016). Whereas the policy-contingency framework would allow for a very situation-specific analysis, this causal link points to a measurable correlation. Echoing (and systematizing) Waltz's (1970) distinction between interdependence, which is mere sensitivity from that which constitutes vulnerability, Keohane and Nye (1977) provided just such a power analysis that leads from vulnerability interdependence to control over outcomes. But that causal slide does not problematize several issues to become important for later power concepts.

First, we cannot understand the behavior in this relation before knowing how the actors to the relation interpret the situation, which, in turn, means how they conceive of themselves and the relation they are in. "Relational" means not just adding up arrows between pre-existing agents but involves interpretive processes that are part of a wider discursive field and processes of identification and recognition.

Second, in this causal reading, if B does not change behavior, then A had no power. But this overlooks the structural asymmetries in a relation where B can be pre-empted

from action. The reasons may be material because B was deprived of the means to act, or ideationally because B was made to belief that its interests are best served in not changing behavior, when that is not the case, or, to use Lukes' (Lukes 2021 [1974]) Gramsci-inspired third dimension, when B's interest formation itself has been biased against the agent's objective interests.[1] All of this may happen without any explicit, let alone direct or intentional, action from A to B.

Finally, besides not capturing all there is to B's power(lessness), it also does not cover all of A's power. There has been a debate in political science about situations that favor some actors yet without any of their ado. Behavioral scholars tended to exclude these issues from the analysis of power to avoid the "power-as-benefit fallacy" (Barry 1989 [1987]: 315). Freeriders do not have power (Polsby 1980: 208). At most, rationalist approaches can include it as an incidence of "systematic luck" (Dowding 1991: 137).[2] But is just anyone free (autonomous, powerful) enough to freeride? And are there not situations where some actors, by their very position within the political or economic structure, act with more effects (i.e. influence) than others, whether intended or not? And what is the relationship between this positional power and the rules of the game? Clearly, to understand power phenomena, it was not enough to look only at the agential level and neglect the structural biases that inform impersonal rule and domination.

Structural power and dependency

In social and political theory, Steven Lukes' seminal approach distinguishes three dimensions of power: a direct behavioralist (Dahl) dimension, an indirect one about the many issues that are excluded from the actual bargaining (Bachrach and Baratz), and a third dimension, where it is the 'supreme exercise of power to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have' (Lukes 1974: 27). Here, the absence of conflict does not necessarily indicate the absence of a power relation but possibly its most insidious form. Lukes derives this approach from Gramsci's understanding of hegemony. Domination is not simply imposed from above but must be won through the subordinated groups' consent to the cultural domination, which they believe will serve their own interests. It works through a naturalized "common sense." At the same time, Lukes is not merely interested in the origins of domination in the common sense shared by the subordinate. Rather, as a philosopher of liberal democracy, the purpose of power analysis is connected to what this tells us about individual autonomy or actual freedom (Lukes 1977) or, in a more structural fashion, how structures "shape fields of possibility" for agents, as Clarissa Hayward (2000: 9) puts it. The more material component of this structural analysis has inspired approaches in International Political Economy taken up in this subsection; the intersubjective mobilization bias and endogenization of identity and interest formation will be subject of the next section, since it has been central in IPS-inspired power analysis.

The debate in IR took up several of these points as early as the 1980s, mostly around concepts of "structural power." Susan Strange insisted on a concept of structural power that would take seriously the above-mentioned positional advantages, non-intended effects, and more generally an analysis that understood power not from A's acts (or resources) but from B's interests and social position in a global order (Strange 1988, 1989, 1996). This important move to a more structural analysis, looking at political and economic order from the receiving side, pushed power analysis to reconsider dependency theory in IR. The view from the periphery is central for dependency scholars. Autonomy in IR is often translated in terms of sovereignty, yet another power-related concept. Dependency theories stem from the awareness that, for many countries in the Global South, formal sovereignty did not bring much control of their political processes (O'Donnell 1973), class formation, and "associated-dependent" (Cardoso and Faletto 1979) or "crippled" economic structures (Senghaas 1982), where the structural effects of global capitalism rules through the workings of states and firms (Dos Santos 1970). The reception of Lukes' three dimensions in systematic IR analysis (Krause 1991) and reception of dependency scholars was accompanied by the first post-Gramscian analyses problematizing power as hegemony (Cox 1983, 1987; Gill 1993; Gill and Law 1988, 1989; van der Pijl 1984).

It is not by coincidence, that most of these approaches are from what came to be called International Political Economy (IPE) in the late 1970s. They attribute power to nonstate actors and, indeed, to structures like global capitalism. By doing so, they politicize economic relations whose effects are not God-given or natural but the outcome of political struggles—struggles whose domination effects are left unseen in bargaining power approaches (Caporaso 1978). In this way, IPE is not just about international economic relations; its focus on structural features of domination redefines the realm of world politics itself.

Yet, while these approaches undoubtedly enrich power analysis by including indirect institutional, non-intentional, and impersonal practices and processes, they also risk overloading the single concept of power in the analysis when trying to keep power as the main explanatory variable (Guzzini 1993). William Riker once distinguished between power concepts that are informed either by necessary and sufficient or by recipe-like (manipulative) kinds of causality (Riker 1964: 346–348) or, put differently, power concepts driven by analyzing either outcomes or agency. Baldwin, following a manipulative idea of power, needed to qualify heavily the situational context to keep the causal link between certain policy instruments and their effect, that is power as influence —with the problem that such approaches tend to ignore nonmanipulative factors in the analysis of power and domination. Structural power concepts include them but then tend toward a necessary and sufficient explanation in which all that affects the asymmetrical outcome is not just related to power but included into the concept of power itself, as if the whole analysis of power was to be done by the factor/variable of power.

Hence, by the time of the sociological turn in IR that become prominent in the 1990s, several new conceptualizations of power had appeared. They mainly developed the intersubjective, discursive, and ritualized practices that would play a role in power relations (see Figure 32.1). IPS will rely on and develop them by moving to a more process-oriented ontology in which the analysis of power and politics is not that which links agent to structure, or vice versa, but that which constitutes agency and structure in the first place (Guzzini 2017a).

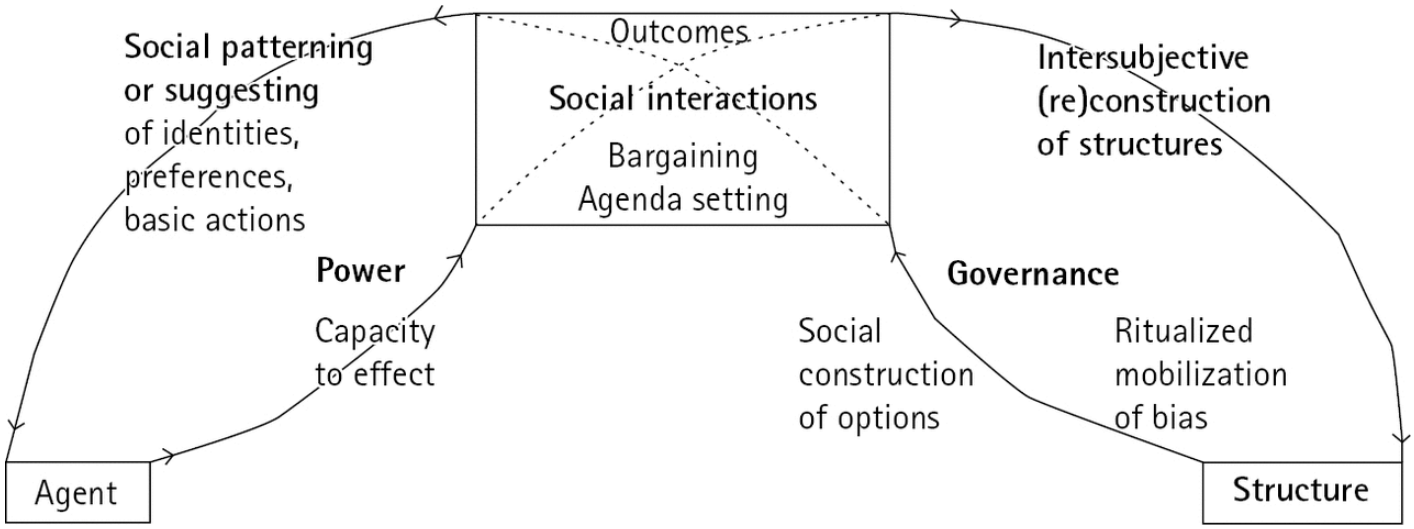

FIGURE 32.1 A dyadic conceptualization of power phenomena

Source: Guzzini (1993: 473).

The power politics of constitutive processes: Social recognition, technologies of government, and performativity

So far, power was understood either as an agency concept that focuses on agent dispositions, or asymmetrical effects of action in social relations, or as dispositions of structures that systematically mobilize biases, dis/empower agents materially, authorize their acts, and make certain actions un/thinkable in the first place. The rise of constructivism and post-structuralism and the establishment of IPS pushed power analysis to take these relational and constitutive processes a step further. What distinguishes recent approaches to power in IR is the different underlying process ontology and a social relationism that "presumes a non-essentialist view of social reality" (Bially Mattern 2008: 696). A relational ontology takes its starting point not from units as fixed items, which then interact, but from the relations through which their actual properties are continuously constituted (for IR, see Jackson and Nexon 1999; Guil laume 2007; Qin 2018). The analysis focuses on the profoundly political processes that constitute subject positions, their identities as well as material and intersubjective contexts (i.e. "how the world is made up") in which power appears as an emergent

property of such relations and processes (Berenskoetter 2007: 15). This ontological shift characterizes three different research agendas in contemporary power analysis within IPS.

A first research line reframes the understanding of power in a more sociological analysis through a theory of action that is no longer utilitarian but based on the fundamental role of social recognition. The analysis of power is based on a certain vision of human nature, in that humans are viewed as profoundly social, their very identity being constituted by the multiple spheres of recognition in which they live. This means, however, that power does not come out of a given drive that finds its expression in asymmetrical social interaction but resides in the constitutive processes that make up the identity of international actors and "govern" the practices that define membership and status in international society.

Second, the Foucauldian lineage of power analysis connects power analysis back to political theory. There, rather than seeing in the evaporation of agency control a sign of diminishing power, it looks at the mechanisms that keep the order together, or the "technologies of government," where government is to be understood as all that which provides political order.

Finally, a third research line, often informed by the previous two, deals with our understanding of power when connected to the idea of the construction of social reality. There, power analysis is tied to the study of performativity, that is the way discursive practices help create the subject they presuppose. This is prominent, for instance, in feminist theories and in the study of reflexivity, that is the interaction between our knowledge and the social world. Perhaps unexpectedly, it is this line that connects power analysis back to the world of diplomatic and other international practice, since it looks at the social conventions that establish proxies for power and the power of those conventions in world politics.

Having connected explanatory theories with both political theory and practice, this can be seen as a return to the initial realist concern with the nature of politics and order. It surely improves on the links between the three domains. But it risks repeating a realist fallacy. Whereas it is arguably correct to see power as always connected to politics, not all politics is always connected or reducible to power. Seeing power not only as coercive but also as productive should neither invite us to reduce all politics to it nor to turn power into the metaphysical prime-mover of all things political.

The power politics of recognition and identity

As mentioned above, IPS is a second answer to the attempt to theorize domination not reducible to a theory of action. In this tradition, power in world politics is not about steering capacity and agent influence. It is about the informal and often tacit ways in which order and hierarchy (stratification) is produced. Rather than seeing in soft and normative power simply mechanisms of institutionalization and socialization, it sees in

them identity-constituting processes that end up constituting the borders of international society and its authorized members.

In a first research agenda in IPS, power is framed not within a utilitarian theory of action but in a social theory of recognition (Pizzorno 2007, 2008). Using recognition for theorizing action and society can be derived from a series of sociological traditions, as for instance, from George Herbert Mead (1934) and Alfred Schutz (1964) to Berger and Luckmann (1966), from Ricoeur (2004), or from different post-Hegelian traditions (Honneth 1992, 2010; Taylor 1989; 1992) and has informed IR scholars ever since the sociological turn (e.g. Ringmar 1996, 2002). There are two social theories of recognition that have been prominent in the rethinking of power relations in IR: Bourdieu's field theory and Goffman's symbolic interactionism, in particular his approach to stigma.

Bourdieu's is still primarily a theory of domination organized around three fundamental concepts: habitus, practice, and field, which constitute each other (for a succinct presentation in IR, see Guzzini 2000: 164–169; Leander 2008). Bourdieu's concept of capital is the closest to the concept of power, sometimes used interchangeably. But it is only one element in the more general theory and analysis of domination (for a more detailed analysis, see Bigo 2011; Guzzini 2013b). For the present purpose, it is important to stress Bourdieu's relational understanding of power, which is closely tied to phenomena of recognition. Hierarchies in fields are constituted by the distribution of capitals that are specifically relevant to the field. As in previous relational approaches to power, Bourdieu's theory of capital is relational in that it is never only in the material or ideational resource itself but in the cognition and recognition it encounters in agents sharing the field and constantly negotiating their status within the field. Yet, Bourdieu adds a further intersubjective component, since his relational analysis of power always insists in the complicity, or, as he sometimes prefers calling it, the connivance that exists between the dominating and the dominated. For this, he mobilizes a theory of symbolic action and symbolic power. Symbolic capital is the form that any capital will take if it is recognized in a strong sense, that is perceived through those very conceptual categories that are, however, themselves informed by the distribution of capitals in the field (Bourdieu 1994: 117, 61). "Doxic subordination" is hence the effect of this symbolic violence, a subordination that is neither the result of coercion or asymmetrical interdependence nor of conscious consent, let alone a social contract, but of a mis(re)cognition (méconnaissance). It is a symbolic, and hence most effective, form of power. It is based on the unconscious adjustment of subjective structures (categories of perception) to objective structures. And so, according to Bourdieu, the analysis of "doxic acceptance" is the "true fundament of a realist theory of domination and politics" (Bourdieu and with Wacquant 1992: 143, my translation).

The initial usage of Bourdieu in IR had applied such misrecognition to the field of world politics itself, indeed to its very constitutive practices as applied by its realist elite. From early on, Richard Ashley tied the understanding of power to a social theory

based on how relations and recognition constitute agency (Ashley 1984: 259). Ashley tried to understand the specificity of international governance by using Bourdieu's phrase of "an orchestra functioning without a conductor" (Ashley 1989). He argued that, despite realist claims to the contrary, there is an international community under anarchy—and that it exists in the very realists who deny its existence (Ashley 1987). This community is all the more powerful in the international system as its theoretical self-description conceals its very existence by informing the common sense, shared in particular among practitioners: the power of the common sense that is uphold in different rituals that convey that power.

In IR, a Bourdieusian analysis of how such recognition and misrecognition empowers certain agents has been applied to the study of international elites and the constitution of certain (expert) fields (e.g. Bigo 1996). Anna Leander has shown how, in the military field, commercial actors are not just empowered in a trivial sense by having become more prominent, but how misrecognition has endowed them with *epistemic power* (Leander 2005)—Bourdieu calls it *épistémocratique* (Bourdieu 2000: 100)—that locks the field (temporarily) into a new *doxa* (Leander 2011). This *doxa* authorizing arguments and turning symbolic the capital of commercial agents provides, in turn, a vision and division of the worlds that "categorically" pre-empts ways to press for the accountability of commercial security forces (Leander 2010). Similar Bourdieu-inspired power analyses have focused on the "doxic battles" (Berling 2012; Senn and Elhardt 2013) or the "never-ending struggle for recognition as competent in a given practice" (Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014: 894). Such struggles are always embedded in the logic of practice that constitutes the field: actors try to win a game whose rules they accept by playing it. Ole Jacob Sending (2015) combines these approaches by showing how authority is not given to an actor but the outcome of a continuous competition for recognition. The so constituted authority defines, in turn, what is to be governed, how, and why. Consequently, power phenomena enter twice this type of analysis: hierarchies within fields are a power phenomenon in themselves, while being constituted by the power politics in the practices of recognition.

Bourdieu's (1989) analysis of symbolic power is closely connected to his concern with the power of classifications (the visions and divisions of the world). Classifications literally make up the social world by organizing the social space and hence its hierarchy and by interacting with agent identity and, indeed, their body (Bourdieu 1980: 117–134), a process Ian Hacking (1999) calls looping effect or interaction effect. In the analysis of world politics, this has been picked up mainly through Erving Goffman's (1963) analysis of stigmatization. Ayşe Zarakol (2011, 2014) shows how the integration of Turkey, Japan, and Russia into the norms of (initially European) international society interacts with their state identity. Stigmatization is a process constitutive of international society, its hierarchy, and in/exclusions. At the same time, any state recognized as not yet normal or inferior within international society will experience ontological insecurity in the state's self-understandings. Consequently, all

action is necessarily informed by stigma coping mechanisms, defiantly accepting, negotiating, or rejecting the stigma but never being able to avoid it (see also Adler-Nissen 2014).

Power practices understood through their interaction with identity processes are also fundamental for Janice Bially Mattern's concept of "representational force" (Bially Mattern 2001, 2005a, 2005b). If identity is crucial for interest formation, then it is only a small step to analyzing how diplomatic practices, whether intended or not, can end up blackmailing actors by taking profit from contradictions in another actor's self-understandings or between its action and self-representation.

The social ontology of this approach, where the other is part of the self and where action is driven by the need for recognition, thus gives rise to different practices and processes of domination.

Technologies of government

Foucault reached the analysis of power in IR in the late 1980s and early 1990s (e.g. Ashley and Walker 1990; Keeley 1990; DuBois 1991; Manzo 1992). Foucault's political theory revises Weber, and his empirical analysis translates Goffmanian sensibilities into a study of discourses and performativity, where discursive practices help create the subject they presuppose. For instance, great power meetings are rituals that both assume their identity and bring them into existence. The Weberian lineage is most visible in Foucault's political theory, which can be seen as a new take on Weber's *stählernes Gehäuse* (Weber 1904: 171), initially translated as "Iron Cage," where the development of (Western) capitalism and rationalism created a new modern subject, both liberated and curtailed. It is the answer to a conservative paradox in modernity: how can the emancipation and empowerment of the citizen lead to more order and control in modern societies?

Here, Foucault develops a dual analysis of modern government. On the one hand, it analyses the interaction between "regimes of truth" and order, that is the way in which government is increasingly a set of practices based on knowledge to administer public and private life, using general "stat(e)"istics and offering services on their base. On the other hand, in a more Goffmanian vein (but rather derived from Canguilhem's work from the 1940s onwards; see Foucault's introduction to Canguilhem 1991), it looks at the way these regimes of truth, be it in medicine, psychology, education, penal law, etc., establish the "normal" and "deviant" classifications that interact with the subjects who take on themselves their own control to stay within the accepted. Government consists in constituting the subject through which, in turn, it achieves order (e.g. Foucault 1975: 223ff.). A branch of post-colonial studies took its inspiration from Foucault for the understanding of how imperial knowledge, for instance in the form of "Orientalism," constituted the colonial "Other" as a "lamentably alien" subject in the first place, making it governable, legitimating its governance, within which the subaltern participates in its own subjugation (Said 2003 [1978]: respectively at 94, 97, 207 (quote), 325).

It is not fortuitous that Foucault's analysis of power comes in terms of "government," which is also a semantic component of the French *pouvoir* (and not *puissance*). Its focus is on the changing mechanisms and technologies in the provision of political order. It shares this focus on order with classical realists but takes a completely different approach. It does not base its analysis in the human lust for power or the inevitable clash of wills, all given before the analysis. The ubiquity of power is not to be found in the struggle for resources that define human relations but in the impersonal processes that constitute the subjects and their relations in the first place (Brown and Scott 2014).

Such an approach to government makes the study of world governance its most obvious field in IR. And yet, such study has been mainly conducted in a Weberian way within neoliberal institutionalism (for a comprehensive reconstruction, see Zürn 2018). This school tends to think of governance mainly in terms of agency (who governs?), scope (what?), and normative content (for what?), raising issues of the various networks of actions, their steering capacity, and its legitimacy and contestation. Foucauldian approaches see governance *constituted* by its mechanisms (how?) (for a discussion of these four problematiques of governance, see Guzzini 2012), be they the political economy of populations, the constitution of insurance and risk management (Lobo-Guerrero 2011, 2012, 2016) or, indeed, the governmentality constituted by the increasing globalization of the fields of practice within which subjects subject themselves to varied "techniques of the self" (Bayart 2004). Through the analysis of those rationalities of government, one can understand agency and scope in the first place.

Such a focus on modes and mechanisms problematizes governance differently. First, it does not assume a public realm (the states), markets, and civil society as something given prior to analysis but studies how liberal rationalities of order have diffused and enmeshed all of them, producing *hybrid authority* (for a more IPE-inspired analysis, see Graz 2019). Firms have to comply with corporate social responsibility, the state apparatus, to become efficient in terms of new public management. By inventing new indices of productivity, such neoliberal practices constitute the public realm as a firm-like actor in the first place. And order is achieved through ever new standards and accounting devices, which work through their very acceptance by, for example, governments that need to be rendered "accountable" in such a way (Löwenheim 2008; Fougner 2008).

For the same reason, Foucauldian analysis of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) insists that, rather than seeing in this global civil society an anti-power or new power, "it is an expression of a changing logic or rationality of government (defined as a type of power) by which civil society is redefined from a passive object of government to be acted upon into an entity that is both an object *and* a subject of government" (Neumann and Sending 2010: 6, 17). Rather than comparing the relative power for the assessment of rank and hierarchy, an analysis of governmentality would concentrate on the new mechanisms through which (self-)regulated behavior, and hence order, is achieved. And here, NGOs are not necessarily a barrier to government located out there with some

hegemonic actors; they are themselves, perhaps unwittingly, part of it (Lipschutz 2005; H ynek 2008; in a less Foucauldian vein, see Bartelson 2006).

Power as convention: Performative and reflexive power analysis

IPS reconnects not only with the political theory of the nature of order and government but also with the practical concern of its use in world politics. Classical realists plead for prudence in the always indeterminate assessment of power to deal with "the most fundamental problem of politics, which is not the control of wickedness but the limitation of righteousness" (Kissinger 1957: 206). Akin to previous traditions in peace research, IPS scholars invite practitioners to reflect and potentially counter the discourses and often self-fulfilling processes that constitute and perpetuate social facts. They do not recoil, as classical realists did, from drawing out the implications of the conventional nature of international politics. Confronted with the missing fungibility of resources and the unavailable objective measure of power, Hedley Bull merely declared that an "overall" concept of power used for comparisons, is "one we cannot do without" (Bull 1977: 114) and pursued the analysis. IPS would follow up on who is that "we." The very understanding of power has power effects in practical politics (for the following, see also Guzzini 2005, 2009, 2016: 33–36).

For while there is no objective measure of power, there are social conventions with which power is measured. The understanding of power is not established by the observer but by the actor. It becomes a social convention. Diplomats must first agree on what counts before they can start counting (Guzzini 1998: 231). And those conventions are hence the effect of negotiations within the diplomatic field and its processes of recognition and, in turn, constitute technologies of government themselves. Understandings of power inform practices and vice versa. Discourses of power and the practices they inform are both performative, in that they intervene in the social world, and reflexive, in that such practices reaffect those discursive practices.

This practical component of "power" has evolved with political discourse, at least in Western traditions. There are two prominent reasons why practitioners cannot do without it, namely the link of power to responsibility and the conventions of hierarchy that tie rank or status to power.

First, in our political discourse, the notion of power is attached to the idea of the "art of the possible," identifying agency and attributing responsibility (Connolly 1974: ch. 3). If there were no power, nothing could be done, and no one could be blamed for it. Therefore, reconceptualizations of power, both among observers and practitioners, often have the purpose of widening what falls into the realm of power in order to attribute agency and responsibility. Things were not inevitable; not doing anything about it requires public justification. Here, the ontological stance of the entire section meets a purpose of power analysis. An ontology that focuses on the constitution of things historicizes and denaturalizes issues (Hacking 1999: 6–7). And in showing how the present was not inevitable, it drags into the open the domination that goes into, and the

modes of legitimation that follow, social facts. For instance, attributing power to the social fact of gender and the dispositions sedimented in gender scripts denaturalizes their role in the existing sexual stratification and in its reproduction. In short, in our political discourse, attributing power politicizes issues (Guzzini 2000, 2005; for an early statement, see Frei 1969).

A second reason for why diplomats cannot do without this practical component of power is the established convention of organizing international society according to different strata, where "great powers" have special responsibilities but also privileges, the most important being "exemptionalism" and impunity. Here, rules, which apply to all others, may apply to them only at their discretion. To establish this special status, proxies of power are agreed to. As in Bourdieu's field of power, where the conversion rates between different forms of capital are (socially) established (Bourdieu 1994: 56), the overall hierarchy is the result of an ongoing fight to establish the rates of convertibility and hence hierarchy of capitals and social groups. It is the struggle for the "dominating principle of domination" (Bourdieu 1994: 34).

This interaction between our conventions of what counts as power and political practice, be it rank or behavior, works both ways. Joseph Nye's concept of soft power was meant not only to describe international relations but also to influence them. If all actors agreed on this understanding of power for attributing rank, then political competition would be on movies and universities, not military bases and economic exploitation. The understanding of power, if shared, changes social reality, here the very nature of world politics. In reverse, countries who may wish to influence the conventions can also do this through their acts and their recognition. It is only logical for an actor to try to foster a convention for proxies of power that fit its profile. When Russia privileges hard power and its exercise, downplaying economic welfare or human rights, and incites behavior that strengthens this understanding, it influences the conventions to its benefit. The more others react in kind, the better. One of the reasons it is so keen on its "sphere of influence" is that such a sphere allows it to do things that otherwise would be forbidden. And it makes Russia equal to others who claim such sphere (for instance, the "Western Hemisphere" for the United States). And precisely because international society knows that impunity is a proxy for rank, it applies economic sanctions and other measures. They are symbolic means in that they are not meant to return to the status quo. Yet, they are very important ones, expressing a refusal to accept someone as a member of that limited club who have discretion in applying social rules. Obviously, such discretion and acceptance of impunity as a proxy for rank can only thrive when it is shared as a "gentlemen's agreement" within the club, as during colonial times.

To conclude on the development of power analysis through social and explanatory theory, we can say that IPS developed the conceptualization initiated in IPE in the 1980s by mobilizing more relational, intersubjective, and performative ontological assumptions, which could be found in, for instance, Bourdieu's (elite) sociology of domination or Foucault's analysis of governmentality. It did so by trying not to

subordinate the study of society to the study of the polity or vice versa, precisely because they are not directly translatable into each other (Bigo and Walker 2007; Walker 2017). This had two implications. On the one hand, it is fair to say that in thinking polity and society, the analysis of the economy, as in the sociology of markets, fell a bit by the wayside, despite some references above and early analyses of the performativity of markets (e.g. MacKenzie 2006), which has prompted attempts to reconnect IPS and IPE. On the other hand, the ontological moves and, perhaps most prominently, the Foucauldian turn, opened up a rapprochement to think politics with political theory proper and not just for the early prominence of R. B. J. Walker. In the following section, we explore some contributions to the analysis of power in IPS through the lens of resistance.

Resistance as a diagnostic of power

Resistance in its various guises has attracted widespread attention in critical IR since the 1990s and has been a consistent feature of work in IPS. Taking resistance as a "diagnostic of power" (Abu-Lughod 1990), we examine power/resistance in three "cognate fields" (Guillaume and Bilgin 2017: Pt 1) of political theory that reflect social struggles since the 1960s: namely, subaltern and cultural studies, post-structural philosophy, and feminist theory. Each of these fields theorizes power from or within resistance, specifically by presuming the simultaneity or ambivalence of power/resistance. Despite being distinct bodies of theory, they share a common analytic of power as a complex field of forces. They thus substantively differ from recent models of resistance studies.

Broadly, influential approaches to resistance in social and political theory since the 1960s have mapped power in three ways. First, Leninist and contemporary communist theorists sustain a modernist political imaginary that dismisses nonrevolutionary resistance as a peripheral distraction from a frontal assault on the real locus of power: only organized, revolutionary vanguardism can effectively rival and displace a centralizing system of power (Badiou 2009; Dean 2012; Hobsbawm 1965). Second, resistance theorists reject this Leninist/contemporary communist imaginary and argue for an analytics of resistance divorced from the modernist teleology that sees it as falling short of allegedly true politics or revolution. On this view, being peripheral or ephemeral does not detract from the significance of resistance (Guha 1997; Scott 1992). Third, theories inspired by autonomist Marxism assert that constituted powers (governments, Empire) are merely delegated by, and thus derivative of, constituent power (the people, the multitude), which retains sovereignty. Since the constituting power is the ultimate font of all power (qua *potentia*), resistance perfectly coincides with power, and revolution against the constituted political form signifies a devolution of delegated power to its source (Hardt and Negri 2000; Negri 1999).

The first two approaches mirror each other as what Pierre Clastres (1994: 163–167) called centripetal and centrifugal understandings of power. In the first, power plays must orient themselves to a center, leaving "mere" resistance marginal; in the second, resistance owes its significance precisely to its flight from (thus continued negative orientation to) power centers (Klausen 2021). By contrast, the third approach does not centralize power but, by distinguishing it as formed or formative, localizes it in an origin with normative value.

These three approaches place into sharp relief more ambiguous, explicitly ambivalent and transversal theories of power/resistance. Foucault's "capillary" model of power, in which power/resistance circulates but without the necessity of forming a center, indeed directly contradicts both centripetalism and centrifugalism and frustrates attempts to mark either origin or meta-norm. In Foucault's (1978: 94) words, "there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix." However, rather than elaborating separately on Foucault's already familiar capillary analysis of power/resistance as simply one more model, we propose instead to embed Foucault's thinking on power in a broader analytic common to several bodies of theory: power as a field of forces.

Power as relations of force, differentials of force, or psychosocial forcefield, comports with the emphasis on the relational, processual, and practice-informed orientation of IPS and also comports with the emphasis on transversal analysis in critical IR approaches more generally. Inspired by anti-colonial, immigrants' anti-racist, feminist, and sexual struggles, the following three clusters also developed theories of power founded on constitutive processes.

Emphasizing complicity, rupture, and regulation above misrecognition, order, and reflexivity, the following analytics also offer alternatives to explanations in terms of a polarity of agency and structure but do not fully resolve contradictions or paradoxes associated with these. Nor do they fully overcome the realist imaginary. Much to the contrary, these clusters may reproduce realist assumptions about power. We return to this in the conclusion.

Power as relations of force: Subaltern and cultural studies

Post-Gramscian theorists of race and empire present analyses of the relations of coercion, consent, domination, and hegemony as fluid, dynamic, constructed, and given to contestation. We reconstruct critical appropriations of Gramsci by Ranajit Guha and Stuart Hall, central theorists, respectively, of subaltern studies and cultural studies. They do not give the same inflections to Gramsci as in the work of Lukes or Cox mentioned above; rather, consonant with the turn to power as resistance, Guha and Hall theorize power from failed hegemony or the possibility of counterhegemony.

The political field, on Guha's view, is neither "unified" nor "singular" but rather split (Guha 1997: ix, 20). Power is a co-production; it is co-constituted by both dominance and subordination. Not tantamount to simple dominance alone or unchanging hierarchy,

power depends on the activity of subordinates. Power founds itself on inequality, though agency inheres in each side of the relation or interaction among strata or groups.

Within Guha's "general configuration of power," dominance and subordination each involve a weighting between pairs of relations. A mutable combination of coercion and persuasion determines the overall character of dominance; likewise, variations of collaboration and resistance constitute subordination. The dynamic between each pair accounts for the fluidity within the dominance–subordination relation and thus of power altogether (see Figure 32.2).

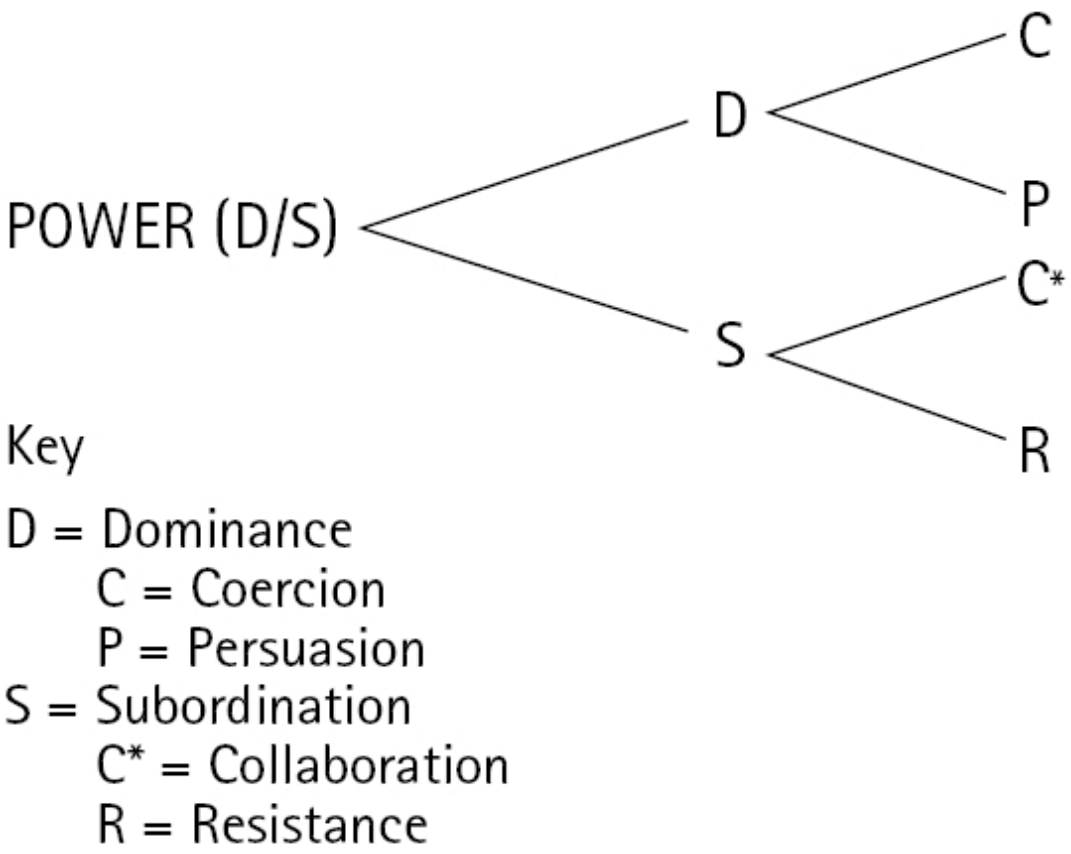

FIGURE 32.2 General configuration of power

Source: Guha (1997: 20).

Moreover, each idiom or image of coercion, persuasion, collaboration, and resistance is available to appropriation and counter-appropriation by elites and subalterns. Thus coercion, persuasion, collaboration, and resistance are given to overdetermination, multiple lines of determination. Inequality and relative mutual autonomy between the dominant and dominated give rise to what Guha calls the "parallax of power" (Guha 1997: 68), a misrecognition whereby each develops, from its perspective, mutually distinct images of the same power phenomenon.

Guha defines hegemony as the relation in which persuasion outweighs coercion within the practice of dominance. Relatedly, he explicitly rejects that dominance and hegemony function as antinomies, as some interpretations of Gramsci assert. Finally, Guha notes

that, among the four terms, resistance sustains especially potent effects: if it outweighs and displaces collaboration altogether, it undoes the subordination relation "and with it, all of that phase of [dominance–subordination] itself." In other words, "elimination of [collaboration] by [resistance] thus signals the end of one round of struggle and the beginning of another" in the career of power (Guha 1997: 55). Theoretically, overwhelming insubordination terminates a given power formation and generates its successor.

Whereas Guha creatively reworks key Gramscian concepts to restore subaltern agency within a fluid configuration of power, Stuart Hall reconstructs Gramsci's theoretical edifice in light of social constructionism. Hall, however, emphasizes reflexivity more than misrecognition and deepens even further an engagement with identity-constituting processes.

Hall (1996: 422) analyses power as what Gramsci (1971: 180–185) had called "relations of force" across the entire social field. Any constituent in the social field (including that field's very boundaries, which mark off nature, culture, economy, etc.) is constructed from relations of force. Such social constructionism is not to be understood in a superficial sense, as the imposition, as though from an exterior, of categories, meanings, and values on a pre-existing material reality by a ruling class, as in unreconstructed theories of ideology. Rather, qua *relations* of force, Hall's constructionism entails *co*-construction and contestation through discursive practices by multiple actors, who are themselves, in turn, differently positioned—thus non-unified, transversally fractured selves or groups—by different discursive articulations.

Hall's unrelenting constructionist perspective implies that there are no guarantees in power analysis and that the analyst of power must break with deterministic assumptions about the predictive or normative value supposedly inherent in any particular political position, site, or subject. Power depends on multiple calibrations of discursive practice motivated by winning and maintaining—or undoing—broad consent among social strata "crosscut by conflicting interests, historically segmented and fragmented." Thus, the unity or identity of any group or individual subject "can never be taken as automatic or 'given' " (Hall 1996: 423). Even racism's "victims" may advance racist discourses: contradictory relations of force constitute them too.

Likewise, relations of force simultaneously disarticulate and rearticulate the alleged sites of politics. To think of the state or other organizing sites of power as themselves processual—indeed, as themselves more or less unstable equilibria of forces rather than fonts of power—unsettles images of fixed institutions, settled constitutions, secure edifices. Sites of institutional power themselves appear as redoubts within a more encompassing struggle of forces. Indeed, Hall questions even the frequency and permanence of hegemony: bids for hegemony and counterhegemony are fragile, subject to constant fissions and fusions of cross-cutting force.

Practically, shifting the balance of forces makes common-sense, popular and cultural sensibilities—in the double sense of affects and experiential rationalities—crucial. For

example, "race" derives from a configuration of power–knowledge–difference (Hall 2017: 47–48). Hence, it functions as a sliding signifier that sustains common sense by positing equivalences across multiple significations (signifieds) of difference, displacing and condensing signs from cultural (spiritual-civilizational), scientific/biomedical (genomic) and visual (phenotypic) codes. No code is self-evident or self-authorizing: even common-sense seeing inscribes bodies with differences that were made meaningful historically by relations of force and which can be reconfigured by other power–knowledge–difference relations. Hall envisions the social field as fractured and power relations as equilibria subject to flux.

Power as differentials of force: Post-structuralism

Power as relations of force in Hall's and Guha's renderings encompasses all social actors; it is not the remit only of members of dominant groups. Hierarchies exist, but no one is per se excluded. All social actors contribute to what Hall called the balance of force relations; all are formed by, and participate in, relations of force. Even as discursive practices and idioms configure their interrelations, *subjects* populate Hall's and Guha's analyses of power. Hence, their theoretical projects comport well with IPS research that emphasizes intersubjectivity.

What would it look like, however, to take seriously Foucault's assertion that "[p]ower relations are both intentional and *nonsubjective*" (Foucault 1978: 94, emphasis added)? As counterpoint to Foucault-inspired work on governmental technologies, we insert Foucault into a wider "post-structuralist" reception of Nietzsche, instigated by Gilles Deleuze's *Nietzsche & Philosophy*, which inspired Foucault and others to theorize anew the will to power, especially in relation to genealogy and difference.

Deleuze analyses force and power in Nietzsche's thought as non-equivalent elements. Neither refers to a conventional political imaginary. Hence, a will to power is not a Hobbesian desire for power after power without end. "All force," Deleuze states, "is appropriation, domination, exploitation of a quantity of reality" (Deleuze 2006: 3). Force, moreover, is plural. Not singular or unilateral, it takes form by encountering friction (counterforce). The appropriated, dominated, exploited also express force; it does not belong solely to what dominates. Forces, then, proliferate and interrelate non-identically.

In themselves, "relations of force remain indeterminate" (Deleuze 2006: 51) unless a further element is added: *power*, qua will to power, produces determinations of force as force*s*. Will describes the differential relation between forces (Deleuze 2006: 7). Like force, will too is plural. The dominated do not lack will. Subordination may denote coercion, an involuntary relation, but subordinates still will, and may will differently. Power derives, then, from differences in relation. Power expresses the will of a force to differ from another force with which it bears a relation. Power as differentials of forces pits at least two wills in contestation. Difference motivates the agonism of wills: "What

a will wants is to affirm its difference. In its essential relation with the 'other' a will makes its difference an object of affirmation" (Deleuze 2006: 9).

Deleuze does not deny the importance of hierarchy for Nietzsche. Hierarchy constitutes bodies, which come into being from tensile inequality: "Any two forces, being unequal, constitute a body as soon as they enter into relationship" (Deleuze 2006: 40). In this sense, hierarchy exists not simply between individual or collective bodies but traverses bodies by constituting them. Bodies, in turn, serve as sites, objects, and vehicles of differences of force. Thus, the will to power does not imply solipsistic self-determination but rather "*affectivity*" (Deleuze 2006: 62), the sensibility to differentials of force. However, affects and the clashes and tensions that produce bodies mean that power analysis cannot map obvious ruptures between, say, oppressor bodies and oppressed bodies but must instead investigate transversal ambivalences and the resonances of "micro" forces. In Foucault's (1978: 96) description, "cleavages in a society" will "shift about," including "furrowing across individuals themselves."

According to Deleuze, forces differ quantitatively, and the unlike quantities take on different qualities. The dominant force is active, hierarchically superior; the subdominant is reactive, inferior. Quantity thus tightly corresponds to quality. An active force "goes to the limit of its power," whereas reactive force is "separated from what it can do" and separates others from what they can do (Deleuze 2006: 59). This quality of reactive forces prevents them from combining or adding up to overcome active force and capture dominance. The image contradicts that of *auxilia belli* in a Hobbesian state of nature, who conjoin their separately weak forces to outmatch another's might quantitatively (Hobbes 1998 [1647]: 34). Instead, reactive forces are subtractive; they decompose. Deleuze's thinking of reactive force as subtractive may inspire provocative insights about power in the social field because it foregrounds a force relation that disables *doing* rather than suppresses essential *being*.

Counter-intuitively, though, "reactive forces can *prevail* without ceasing to be inferior in quantity and reactive in quality" (Deleuze 2006: 58, emphasis added). Deleuze's and Foucault's reversal of Carl von Clausewitz's famous aphorism offers clues on how to understand this. Foucault explicitly called it "Nietzsche's hypothesis" that "politics is the continuation of war by other means" (Foucault 2003: 16; Klausen 2011). In between the lines of treaties and laws and animating the alleged good conscience of compromise, one finds not just the perpetuation of war but, in fact, the raging of *reactive* forces specifically. Qua legalism, pacifism, and moralism, reactive forces disarm active forces, disintegrate them, and strive to institute a new dispensation that demobilizes them: "Humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules" (Foucault 1998: 378).

For the analyst of power, this ambiguity—domination per se or prevalence?—renders the art of genealogical interpretation tricky. Fundamentally, the genealogical "history of a thing … is the succession of forces which take possession of it and the co-existence of

the forces which struggle for possession." "The same object, the same phenomenon," Deleuze continues, "changes sense depending on the force which appropriates it" (Deleuze 2006: 3). Genealogy thus reconstitutes the nonsubjective differentials of force that produce subjects and objects and the power plays that deviate, reverse, or "confiscate" (Foucault 1998: 385) a particular state of forces-in-difference. Foucaultian genealogy deepens Deleuze's insight about the differentiating effects of *appropriation*, that is, the way that appropriation lends new sense to something.

Although Foucault does not emphasize the concept difference per se, it implicitly governs his thinking of genealogical discontinuity. Explicit theoretical attention to difference as *différance* has become most associated with Derrida, who defined *différance* as "the name we might give to the 'active,' moving discord of different forces, and of differences of forces" (Derrida 1982: 18). Derrida, in effect, contends that difference makes power, not the converse (1988: 149):

> there is never anything called power or force, but only differences of power and of force, and that these differences are as qualitative as they are quantitative. In short it seems to me that one must start, as Nietzsche doubtless did, from difference in order to accede to force and not vice versa.

Whereas Deleuze divorced quantitative prevalence and qualitative dominance, Derrida seems to retain the possibility of a Hegelian logic whereby a shift in quantity leads to a change in quality. Derrida highlights the "ruses" of power, especially the paradox that the logics of quantity can shift. Less can be more, for example, when power is organized by an economy of violence: one well-directed or well-timed intervention can deter a cascade of violent effects.

Foucault's formulation of power and resistance in *History of Sexuality* invited misreadings that essentialize resistance by seeking to distinguish it categorically from the regimes of power it contests. However, the foregoing reconstruction of the argument that difference makes power suggests that, instead of treating resistances as the antinomy of power, it makes more sense to substitute "differential force" or simply "difference" for "resistance" in *History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1978: 95): "Where there is power, there is [difference], and yet, or rather consequently, this [differential force] is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power."

This theoretical cluster, though abstract, has informed statements on developments in IPS (Huysmans and Nogueira 2016, 2021) and offers a potent reversal of the priority of resistance and power that can inform IPS research. Though Deleuze and Foucault foreground the trickiness of interpretation, the prioritization of active force as pushing its own limits, the demotion of reactive force, and its definition as limiting or dissolving what others can do all suggest a way to rethink oppositional social struggle as *logically* prior to the authorities that prevail over it: insurgent self-affirming difference comes *before* its counter-insurgent police. With the emphasis on difference, moreover, culture gains importance. Defined as differential activity rather than substance, culture dominates a portion of reality to generate and affirm group identity (Appadurai 1996:

12–13). Difference is dominant, not dominated. Domination on this view is decoupled from oppression per se. Thus the dominant power (say, Algeria's anti-colonial movement) can be oppressed by reactive force (French occupiers).

Power as psychosocial force field: Feminist theory

Euro-Atlantic second-wave feminism left a contradictory legacy for theorizing power. On the one hand, essentially masculine power oppressed via "the patriarchy" as a pervasive system. On the other hand, women sought empowerment and proclaimed that "sisterhood is powerful." "Feminist visions of emancipation and equality" of the 1960s and 1970s, in Wendy Brown's and Joan Scott's (2014: 335) summation, "simultaneously required power, reviled power, and projected a world in which power was radically reduced if not eliminated."

Feminist appropriations of Foucault helped to diagnose these incongruous evaluations of power but, at the same time, raised other questions. If power were productive and not simply repressive, then how do subjects get attached to, inhabit, and reproduce the identity-truths conferred on them by taxonomic grids?

Feminists were not alone in developing exciting lines of inquiry from Foucault. Edward Said (2003 [1978]), Joseph Massad (2007), and Arturo Escobar (1995) extended Foucault to offer post-colonial analyses of the archaeology of authoritative knowledge of the Orient, the historical production of Arab sexualities, and the making of the Third World in development discourse, all international accounts of power-knowledge. However, we focus here on feminist theorizations of the production/reproduction of subjects because they locate power in a different inside/outside: namely power that traverses—draws, violates, depends on—the boundary between the psyche and the social.

Butler's account of gender performativity resumed Foucault's suspicion of interiority and of regimes of knowledge that depend on surface/depth models whereby enduring truth must be sought underneath variable exterior forms. Butler thus locates gender in external repetitions: deeds (bodily acts) retroactively fabricate the doer (gendered subject), not vice versa, just as, allegedly, gender (cultural surface) retroactively determines sex (biological depth). External repetitions, though, may always misfire and therefore never seem to achieve unquestionable authority. On this account, subversion, unintentional or otherwise, always haunts the power of the norm, even especially in its repetition. Hence, for Butler, resistance arises at the exact point of the reproduction of power, not in a moment distinct from power's maintenance.

All this attention to exterior repetitions might leave the impression that subjects are only surfaces. Departing from Foucault's suspicion of depth as source of truth, Butler later confronted the tension between power in subjection and power in *assujetissement* (subjectivation). For this endeavor, which calls for attention to power's operations *internal* to the subject, Freudian theory must supplement blind spots in Foucault's account of productive power, despite Foucault's sometimes harsh criticisms of

psychoanalysis as a human science. The feminist theorists to follow all reflect on what attaches subjects to power and how power attaches to subjects.

Butler's subject inhabits an ambivalent zone of power between subjection and subjectivation; that is, subjectivation paradoxically operates not merely by fashioning a subject empowered as agent but by positively inducing this agent to attach to its own subjection. Identifying the subject as the "modality of power that turns on itself" ' (Butler 1997: 6) would seem to favor power's spatio-temporal priority, but subjects also condition the possibility of power. Thus, power does not definitively pre-exist the subject because it cannot persist without repetition and thus without "the subject [as] precisely the site of such reiteration" (Butler 1997: 16).

However, in order not to relegate Foucault to a behavioristic account of social construction as social conditioning, Butler argues, the subject as "power in recoil" (Butler 1997: 6) must be thought in relation to psychic processes of social regulation—specifically, a critical reconstruction of the "incorporation" of norms. Incorporation does not mean internalization, however. Ordinary language misleads by separating inside/outside and before/after, with pre-existing external norms crossing into a presumptively antecedent interior, according to the common image of internalization. Butler argues that the very boundary between psyche and the social comes into being in the recoil of power. *Incorporation* brings into being the (bodily, but not just material) surface/depth interface at which psyche and the social supposedly meet as separate fields (Butler 1997: 19).

In this account, the regulatory modality of power plays across a boundary that it instantiates in the incorporation of the subjects required for power's very persistence. Hence, regulation does not refer to the imposition of norms unidirectionally. Power here is recursive and transversal. The psychosocial life of power thus calls for theorizing norms as objects of fantasy, which incites dense transfers across the incorporated barrier between psychic and social fields. The body "is precisely the site where the desire for the norm takes shape, and the norm cultivates desire and fantasy in the service of its own naturalization" and repetition (Butler 2000: 155). A post-Freudian rendering of Foucault suggests that norms and fantasy are codependent (Berlant 2014b).

Butler's previous emphases on resistance sparked a number of far-reaching though friendly critiques by other feminists. Wondering whether repeated aberrant citations of gender sufficed to loosen the hold of norms, Berlant argued that "a historical view of this optimistic scenario reminds us how much performative variation a dominant regime can absorb into its normative domain" (Berlant 2014a: 90). Normativity, in short, derives part of its power from its flexibility, its capacity to outmaneuver and absorb aberrations. Certainly, Butler addressed this criticism of parodic subversion, arguing that regulatory powers thrive on aberrations from gender norms.

Nonetheless, Berlant urges analysts of power to attend also to culture formation as counterpoint to subject formation, not to leave undertheorized the political context within which resistant acts gain traction (Berlant 2014a: 90). In other words, sociality, and not

just repetition, merits attention in interrogating power (Berlant 2014a: 90). Berlant thus questions the implications of a perceived focus on subject formation principally and culture formation only secondarily in Butler's work. Transformations of hegemony and normativity require shifts in culture formation. Aberrant citations of norms may mark instabilities in normative authority, but destabilization as a cultural process depends on resonances in, and realignments of, sociality beyond isolated pockets.

Both Berlant and Saba Mahmood, moreover, searchingly scrutinized the orthodoxy that had consolidated around resistance. Berlant (2011: ch. 3) wondered about the conscious heroism and individual sovereign agency presumed in attributions of quotidian noncompliance and proposes that the category "resistance" overreads some ordinary acts as defiance of authorities. Mahmood, meanwhile, noticed a tendency in Butler's theoretical project to align resistance with opposition to normativity, thus unwittingly echoing a liberal imaginary of resistance as the reclamation of autonomy by the subject of freedom. If the will to subvert norms is "not an innate desire" (Mahmood 2005: 14), then Butler's account thus appears culturally and historically specific, and it behoves the analyst of power to rethink the subject of norms and possibly to bypass the category "resistance." "Norms are not only consolidated and/or subverted," Mahmood concludes, "but performed, inhabited, and experienced in a variety of ways" (Mahmood 2005: 22).

For Brown and Scott (2014: 339), Foucault's "analytics" of power challenges three "modernist conceptions of power": as sovereignty (position of ruling or being ruled), as commodity (possession one has or lacks), and as repression (force that restricts or that one rebels against). Each has problematic consequences for analyzing forms of oppression. Some arguments about intersectionality or degrees or axes of privilege tend to present race, gender, sexuality, class, and so on as modalities of power that are discrete. Indeed, they *are* "created through different histories, different mechanisms and sites of power, different discursive formations, different regulatory schemes" (Brown 2005: 123). However, subjects are complex productions of power that are neither interchangeable nor additive: "we are not fabricated as subjects in discrete units by these various powers: they do not operate on and through us independently, or linearly, or cumulatively" (Brown 2005: 123). Thus, a theory of the production of subjects must take account of contingent discursive processes "that do not honor analytically distinct identity categories" (Brown 2005: 123). Taking Butler seriously on gender regulation means not only specifying "noncomparable" forms of power (Brown 2005: 124) but also acknowledging that the very appearance of multiple axes of social subjection (gender/race/sexuality, etc.) is as much a product of power as before/after and inside/outside; that is, "race" or "gender" do not act on the subject from some prior and external space (and much less are they the interior truth of subjects); rather, they might be better understood as naming *dispositifs*, contingent assemblages of multiple technologies of subjection and subjectivation that *retrospectively* appear to act as a unified force. Ultimately, power's psychosocial recoil defies the geometry of axes and degrees and the mathematics of addition.

Conclusion: The fallacies of power analysis in IPS

As we saw, power reconceptualizations turned into a paradoxical critique of realism: the problem with realism was not that it gave a central role to power but that it did not take it seriously enough. All the wider approaches of power ultimately undermined the rather materialist, utilitarian, and agential understanding of power so prominent in realism, but not only so. Yet, the more those new social ontologies and theories came to underwrite power analysis, the more the realm of power seemed to grow and lead to another dead end. Power may or may not be ubiquitous but not all there *is*, is about power. It is as if the political tradition of realism played a bad trick by staying latent, leading researchers to find ever new phenomena that could count as power. Not being taken seriously enough before, power has started to be taken too seriously. This overstatement of power comes in three different versions.

One pertains to the usage of power in explanatory theories. When the realist concern with power in political theory was translated into power as central explanatory factor, whether agential or structural, it became an ever-wider category in the attempt to take the seemingly endless list of factors into account with which to understand outcomes and political order. Power retains its central causal role, hence all with causal effects is retranslated back into the concept of power. As mentioned in the introduction, that invites a strategy of decoupling the analysis of power relations and the concept of power: more factors than "power" may enter into the analysis of power relations (Guzzini 1993). But it could also imply something more fundamental, namely that power is not to be used as a causal explanatory variable at all (Guzzini 2017c).

Another overstatement is closely related. It is very common to read in Foucault-inspired writings about the actions of power, when "power" has effects. Where classical agential approaches were often circular since they inferred power from influence over outcomes and explained influence over outcomes by the (causal) role of power, so is it also not uncommon to see the political order (Foucault's "government") explained by the mechanisms of "power" and the mechanisms of "power" explained by the political order. Similarly, the constitution of subjects and acts is, at times, explained by the effects of such "power". Judith Butler has warned about this usage, where power "is misconstrued as a grammatical and metaphysical subject" in which "power appears to have displaced the human as the origin of activity" thereby reconsolidating "the metaphysics of the subject" (Butler 1993: xviii). If process and relational ontologies wish to overcome the substantialism of social theory, using power in such reified manner, even if derived from relations, only reproduces the problem. Such "power" does not explain; it begs the question.

Finally, in its link back to political theory, post-Foucauldian power analysis smuggles in the old realist fallacious reversal: power is always about politics, but politics is not always about power. Widening the concept of power (and violence) in its tendency to reduce all analysis to asymmetrical relations unwittingly ends up reproducing the realist

assumption of politics as fundamentally *and solely* about struggle and domination. Social theories that take another path are, in good realist manner, dismissed as living in a liberal teleological phantasy, "lacking the analysis of power." Yet, there are political theories that can hardly have been considered blind on power (as domination and/or violence in all its facets), while having a more comprehensive take on politics. So does Hannah Arendt still retain the link between her definition of politics and power, but she offers a communicative take on power ("power with"), famously defined as "the human ability not just to act but to act in concert" (Arendt 1969: 44), offering a way to include solidarity into our understanding of politics (Allen 1998: 35–37, 2002: 143).[3]

This threefold fallacious conflation of power with cause, agency, and the nature of politics prompts a final consideration. Focusing on power leads us to view a variety of phenomena such as these, and potentially view them together. But from there, "power" should not become the shortcut for all of them. In fact, power may be the name we give to a diverse set of relations, which is the real subject of the analysis. In this context, Peter Morriss writes that power statements "*summarise* observations; they do not *explain* them" (Morriss 2002: 44, emphasis in the original). And Foucault (1976: 123) has insisted on the "nominalist" nature of his conceptualization of power, however often this has been forgotten since: "it is the name one gives to a complex strategic situation in a given society." Power as a relation does not explain; it needs to be explained or understood itself. The analysis of power is less about what it does than about what constitutes a certain type of relation in the first place.

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Notes

1. This reference to 'false consciousness' has been criticized for its assumed fixed (structuralist) account of preference formation and for the patronizing attempt of the observers to substitute their visions for those of the actors. For a spirited response, see Lukes (2021 [1974]: 129–156).
2. Brian Barry did not go that way. See the exchange with Keith Dowding (Barry 2002, 2003; Dowding 2003).
3. For placing Arendt into such a context, see e.g. Isaac (1992), Kalyvas (2008), and Strong (2012).

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CHAPTER 33

MILITARY POWER

JENNIFER SPINDEL

Introduction

Military power is the *ultima ratio* in international politics. Using military force is always an option, and the mere threat of military power can coerce actors into changing course. As a concept, we generally associate military power with everything needed to sustain a war effort, from tanks, and planes, and service personnel to the economic and demographic potential of a state. The more weapons, personnel, and resources an actor has, the more powerful he or she is. While tabulations of force are an important first cut in understanding military power, military power draws on sources other than these and has uses and consequences beyond the battlefield. Half a century ago, Robert Art asked "to what ends military power?" But there are necessary and prior questions: What *is* military power? What are the sources of its potential power? How is military power used? How does seeking military power affect relations between actors? What are the social conventions that determine how military power is measured and shape its use?

This chapter explores these questions by analyzing the sources, uses, and consequences of military power. As Guzzini and Klausen suggest in the lead article, conceptualizations of military power widened the concept of military power too far. Yet, the traditionalists don't have it right either; military power is more than tabulations of force or the balance of power. There is a middle ground that will allow us to hold on to the sociological and relational foundations of military power while still avoiding the tendency to overly widen the concept. Military power relies on symbols and shared understandings, is marshalled according to perceptions and imaginaries, and can have effects on organizations, structures, and relational power.

What is military power? Where does it come from?

Military power is an instrument of political power. Peter Paret (1989: 240) described it as "one of the instruments with which political power is originally created and made permanent." Military power is not synonymous with war, though war-fighting is one of the possible uses of military power. Most analyses of military power begin by tabulating force. However, most tabulations of force offer little insight into the actual

fighting capabilities of one force against another (Montgomery 2020: 315). That's because, as the lead essay hints, there are debates about what counts as military power and whether military power should be conceptualized broadly or narrowly. Guzzini and Klausen note that expansive definitions count not just defense budget, size of forces, and military arsenal, but also economic power, demographics, industrial capabilities, and social morale. These definitions place nearly all social and political phenomena under the umbrella of military power, in turn muddying the concept beyond theoretical or analytical use. However, taking a narrow approach by looking at the instruments of military power—weapons and how an actor can use them—offers an incomplete look at military power. This section explains why straightforward tabulations of force are insufficient for understanding military power and then turns to specific variables that scholars should pay attention to when determining how actors build military power.

More than tabulations of force

Tabulations of force can be a useful first cut; a blunt analysis that can answer basic questions such as "Does this actor have the airpower to conduct a bombing campaign?" There are a number of sources that tabulate force, such as the annual *Military Balance* series prepared by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), which lists the weapons a state has at its disposal. Gannon's Distribution of Military Capabilities Dataset (rDMC) has helpfully compiled this annual data into a machine-readable format, making it a significant resource for comparing capabilities among states, within alliances, and over time. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute maintains a database of major conventional arms sales, and the US Department of State produces the World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfer databases, an annual report that includes military and economic datapoints for all countries. Yet, even realists, who are most interested in material power, acknowledge that tabulations of force are incomplete conceptualizations of military power.

One improvement on simple tabulations of force is to analyze the offense–defense balance, or whether it is cheaper to attack than it is to fend off an attack from an adversary. When offense has the advantage, scholars believe war is more likely (Glaser and Kaufmann 1998; Lynn-Jones 1995). While it is an intuitive addition, it raises difficult questions about what counts as an offensive or defensive weapon. Fortifications (like the Maginot Line) could be defensive, because they make it harder for an adversary to attack. But they could, alternately, be seen as offensive if they enable a military to conduct operations beyond the state's borders, leaving behind a smaller contingent to man the fortifications. The "offensiveness" or "defensiveness" of a weapon is a *social* fact, not an inherent one. It depends on perceptions and, as Wilcox (2009) argues, intersubjective agreement. Weapons do not have an inherent meaning or use that can be used to inform the offense–defense balance, which means that even

tabulations of force depend on social and perceptual dynamics (see also Spindel 2025; Suchman and Eyre 1992; Wendt and Barnett 1993).

Scholars have also studied military power by focusing on the power projection capabilities of weapons. Some weapons—aircraft carriers, submarines, bomber jets—allow states to extend the reach of their military power significantly beyond their borders. However, states' abilities to get weapons where they need to go depends on things like overseas bases, the integration capacity of different service branches, and legal agreements to allow military materiel to transit through spaces. The immense logistical work this takes is frequently overlooked in analyses of military power (Baker 2020 and Van Creveld 2004 are two exceptions). Further, the smooth operating of logistics often depends on the unappreciated labor of women and other "camp followers" (Enloe 2000; see also Spanner 2017). These actors are rarely included in analyses of military power, even though their informal and often invisible work is, in many ways, the foundational prerequisite of military power.

Conceptualizing military power through tabulations of force is misleading because there can often be a disconnect between possessing the instruments of military power and turning those instruments into usable military power. Take the modern system, for example, which is a mode of warfare that reduces exposure to increasing lethality of the battlefield (Biddle 2004: 3). The modern system's small-group offensive maneuvers and defense-in-depth require states to invest in and trust junior officers and senior enlisted personnel. Having the most sophisticated weapons available will not matter if a state's civil–military relations, funding priorities, or cultural constraints—such as rigid hierarchy or deference to authority—prevent the modern system from taking hold (Biddle 2004: 48). A crucial source of military power is not just its instruments, but how those instruments intersect with political and social factors to translate potential power into kinetic power.

Even at first cut, then, understanding the sources of military power requires understanding logistics, gender dynamics, and organizational behavior. There are two additional categories of sources of military power: external sources, such as alliances and diffusion/emulation, and internal factors, including civil-military relations and how states create a political community to support the use of military power.

External sources of military power

There are two external sources of military power: alliances and how an actor can emulate the power of others. These specific factors help narrow the concept of military power while highlighting two important variables that scholars should include.

Actors seeking to increase their military power often take cues from other, more powerful states. This is one of the primary motivators for forming alliances, which, by aggregating military power, can provide actors with significantly more potential

military power than they could have created on their own (Snyder 1997; Walt 1990). There are, however, ongoing debates about the effectiveness and reliability of different types of alliances (Henry 2020; Leeds and Anac 2005; Morrow 1991, 2000). Although alliances may serve as aggregations of military power, that power might not be usable in all situations, which should induce caution in including alliances as a source of military power. In general, more formalized alliances are less reliable than less formal alliances, and alliances that create a security community—like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)—tend to be stronger and more durable (Adler 2008; Gheciu 2005; Leeds and Anac 2005).

Diffusion and emulation is a second external source of military power. States emulate the militaries of peers (and sometimes adversaries) and will often seek to adopt the same new weapons as other states. But whether a state can emulate others and take advantage of diffusing technologies depends on social and cultural factors. For example, cultural tolerance, or how open elites are to outside ideas and knowledge, determines a state's likelihood of emulating others (Goldman 2006: 90). Even if a state is open to drawing on knowledge produced by others, it might not be able to do so. Actors need the capacity and skill to make use of the new knowledge and technologies. This requires both the resources to buy or build new technology and also organizational capacity, a skilled workforce, and a cumulative technological knowledge base, among other factors (Gilli and Gilli 2019; Horowitz 2010b). Once adopted, making use of the new technology depends on recruiting (can you seek out and retain people with the right skills and knowledge?) and training (can you integrate the new technology into your existing force?).

Internal sources of military power

As Guzzini and Klausen note, most scholars also consider demographics, economics, and industrial capacity to be key parts of military power, since these can affect the size of a military a state can raise, the money it can spend on that military, and the level of technological sophistication we should expect its armed forces to have. But these dimensions are too broad and overlook some of the key variation that affects how states build military power. More specifically, civil–military relations, the organizational culture of the military, and domestic nationalism and narratives are sources of military power. This set of factors allows us to narrow down what "counts" for military power to the dimensions that matter most analytically.

Civil–military relations are an underappreciated source of military power. Although having the instruments of military power is a necessary prerequisite, civil–military relations filter and channel that potential power. For example, recent scholarship has shown that good military leadership and clear mission goals—rather than bonds of brotherhood—will significantly improve a military's effectiveness (Kier 1998; MacCou

n and Hix 2010; MacKenzie 2015; Spindel and Ralston 2020). Or, as Brooks (2007: 1) said, military effectiveness depends on "the peculiarities of their political cultures, social structures, and institutions." While the field of civil–military relations is broad, the parts of it that address military effectiveness and organizational culture are important for understanding the sources of military power. Fearing coups, autocratic regimes often take measures that impede military effectiveness, such as limiting communications between branches of the military and promoting based on loyalty/political litmus tests rather that merit (Bausch 2018; Brown et al. 2016; Reiter and Wagstaff 2018). These actions undercut the effectiveness of the military, and can, in some cases, lead the military to suppress uprisings or cause civil wars (Albrecht 2015; Pilster and Böhmelt 2011). Coup fears can thus affect the amount of potential power a military has, as well as relations between the military and the general public, which complicates, including a broad "demographics" variable as a source of military power.

Nationalism and narratives create a strong political community, which can help translate potential military power into usable military power. Nationalism and narratives affect domestic public views and support of the military as an institution and of specific uses of military power. A public that is supportive of its military is more likely to support military actions and resist criticizing the military than a public that is skeptical. A hawkish public might even be able to pressure political elites into war (Levy 1988: 664; Van Evera 1994). Political elites can try to create a supportive public through narratives. The stories a community tells itself—which get reproduced over time—structure politics and help people interpret events (Freedman 2006: 22; Krebs 2015: 140). Narratives can mobilize (or demobilize) a public and are thus a key source of military power (Freedman 2013: 429; Goddard and Krebs 2015: 7). For example, Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine was accompanied by Russian-created narratives designed to galvanize the Russian public, justify the invasion, and set the terms for narrative contestation. On February 24, as the invasion was unfolding, Russian President Vladimir Putin narrated the war as one of liberation and "denazification," claiming that Russia's forces would protect ethnic Russians in Ukraine from "humiliation and genocide" (Treisman 2022). Framing the invasion as one of protection of Russian nationals, rather than the reality of conquest, was one way in which Putin tried to create and maintain domestic political support for the invasion.

Rather than using broad variables like demographics, economics, and military power, we should take a more analytically focused approach to understanding the sources of military power. This analytic refocusing raises conceptual and methodological complications for measuring an actor's military power. For example, should analyses include the offense–defense balance as a source of power? What about the gendered perceptions that can lead to a cult of offensive power (Wilcox 2009)? Even if we leave aside the issue of perceptions, there is still the problem of geography and skill: Would scholars need to have a unique measure of military power for each potential dyad or each geographic type of conflict? How should we conceptualize and measure diffusion

or emulation capacity? How should civil–military relations, public support, and narratives be incorporated into our analyses? More crucially, is there a way to incorporate or appreciate these factors in a way that avoids making military power either too specific or too broad? It may well be the case that different factors will matter more for different actors or in different scenarios. For example, an actor defending territory from invasion will likely need to do less narrative and domestic opinion support, since it is clear the actor needs to defend their territory. Organizational culture might matter more for autocratic regimes that follow coup-proofing procedures —and thus often disrupt bonding and merit-based promotion—than it does for democracies. However, there may well be significant cultural differences in regimental-style militaries like the United Kingdom compared to militaries like the United States, where service members rotate among different battalions throughout their career. Scholars studying military power will need to decide which sources of military power are most important for their analysis.

Uses of military power

Military power is most obviously used in war and war-adjacent endeavors. But how and where states decide to use their military power is conditioned by security imaginaries and perceptions and by the growing legalization of the battlefield. Decisions to use military force are not objective or inherent to any particular security situation but instead rely on the social processes that define what is seen as a threat and the appropriate response to that threat. Additionally, military power is used for cooperative ventures like peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

Security imaginaries and perceptions

Where and when military power is used depends on perception and imaginaries, which are social processes that can change over time. While realist theories would suggest any threat to the balance of power could be met by military force, new research shows that perceptions and social practices determine how states interpret security situations and plan to use their military power in response. For example, whether or not a rising power is seen as a threat depends on its diplomatic rhetoric and how it justifies its behavior (Goddard 2018). Similarly, domestic political narratives often affect whether and how a state is willing to use its military power to pursue various goals (Goddard and Krebs 2015; Ralston 2022).

Security imaginaries affect the uses of military power by providing a scheme for organizing, filtering, and interpreting security issues that actors face. Security imaginaries are social and political discourses that constitute and legitimize specific

interpretations and responses to a security situation (Li 2016: 14; Pretorius 2008: 100). Threats, and responses to them, are defined by social processes and relational dynamics. One way to identify security imaginaries is through the language used to describe threats or issues. For example, the various terms used to conceptualize cyber space/the cyber domain/cyber war/information war can reveal how different actors imagine and interpret security and responses in the online/internet environment (Branch 2021). Security imaginaries can also determine the general goals toward which military power is used. China's security imaginary, for example, includes great power ambitions, which is why it has transformed its military to project an image of great power capabilities (Li 2016: 119). For the United States, the imaginary at the end of the Cold War saw war as risk management, which uses military force to minimize risks for unacceptable adversary behavior (Schmitt 2020: 406). When and where military power is used depends just as much on interpretations and imaginaries as it does on "objective" balances of power.

Perceptions and narratives are a key piece of security imaginaries. Perceptions of threat help actors create a hierarchy of threats toward which their military power can be used. Actors will vary in how they rank threats, and hierarchies do not need to be shared by others (Freedman 1998: 40; Giles 2016: 97). More concretely, the hierarchy of threats has observable implications for a state's plans to use its military power. Kuo (2021), for example, shows that the British Navy used aircraft carriers differently from the US Navy because the British perceived greater threats from land-based adversary aircraft. Rather than seeing one use of aircraft carriers as better or more advanced than the other, we should look to the effects of perceptions on structuring beliefs about military power.

Similarly, narratives can create security imagines through the construction of threat, which, in turn, legitimizes the use of military power. In addition to the narrative about "denazification" and Ukraine, Putin argued that "modern Ukraine was entirely and fully created by Russia," and that "Russia needed to save Ukraine from Western corruption" (Schwirtz, Varenikova, and Gladstone 2022). The threat that Russia perceived was both to ethnic Russians being targeted by Ukrainian "Nazis" and a broader existential threat to Russian territory. This narrative successfully created a threat that—in the eyes of Putin and many Russians—legitimized the invasion and the use of military power.

How should we study the use of military power when it is based on less material and tangible factors like security imaginaries and perceptions? Common evidence sources include doctrinal documents, leaders' statements, and archival materials. Key is to reconstruct not just what was written down but the social and political context in which statements were made, paying special attention to points raised in internal discussion that did not make it into final written documents. Doctrinal publications—manuals on how to fight different types of war—are helpful tools for studying the uses of military power (see Avant 1993; Long 2008). As Snyder notes, such analysis cannot just unthinkingly read doctrine to reconstruct imaginaries and threat perceptions—scholars

need to be aware of the "sociological whole" or the political, historical, and organizational context in which documents were written and statements made (Snyder 1977: 8). Kier's interpretative approach to studying culture and doctrine in inter-war Europe stands out as a replicable example of understanding how perceptions and imaginaries shaped the uses of military power (Kier 1997). Kier uses archival and historical documents, including training manuals, curriculum at military academies, and internal communications, to determine culture and perceptions. Her explanation of research methods is a valuable resource for scholars looking to undertake a similar analysis (Kier 1997: 30–38).

Studying security imaginaries also requires understanding the narrative and rhetorical environment in which states operate. Branch, for example, shows how metaphorical language in cybersecurity—specifically "cyberspace domain"—has been crucial for the conceptualization of cybersecurity threats and has shaped the US and global response to cybersecurity issues (Branch 2021). To understand the narrative and rhetorical environment, he surveyed public and declassified US military and Department of Defense documents for "trends in dominant terminology and implied foundational metaphors" (Branch 2021: 46). Focusing on this level of language, he notes, is one way to identify broad narrative and rhetorical patterns. Similarly, MacKenzie (2015) shows that the logic of war depends on the "myth" of the band of brothers; gendered stories that are foundational social and cultural justifications of war (and thus the use of military force). She traces the development and spread of this narrative through official military and government reports, news articles and opinion pieces, and public comments on online articles (MacKenzie 2015: 16–17). Both Branch and MacKenzie's discussion of how they used documents to understand narratives, rhetoric, and military power stand as examples for future research.

Legally using military power: Lawfare

Though we often think of law as a constraining force on the uses of military power, law can just as often be an enabling force and a tool of military power, as seen in the growing legalization of the battlefield and "lawfare." Boundaries of warfare are debated and asserted through legal and juridical rhetoric (Dill 2014; Kennedy 2006: 5). The legalization of the battlefield has led to lawfare, which is a practice "performed by social actors acting in a milieu of power relations" (Jones 2016: 232; see also Raymond 2021). In other words, the uses of military power are defined and redefined by social actors conscious of their power relations across legal and normative domains.

Should such debates about legality and legitimacy in warfare be including in a chapter on military power, or does that risk broadening the concept of "military power" beyond recognition?

As the lead essay explained, not everything should be about power, and including lawfare among the uses of military power might seem a bridge too far. However, legal and juridical terrain is constitutive of military power. As Jones (2016: 222) said, "law constantly intervenes in and gives shape to war." Law and lawfare can become a force multiplier, defining certain uses of military power as acceptable or unacceptable (see e.g. Dunlap Jr 2009). Ignoring the legal terrain would overlook the social and political processes that govern what actors consider to be appropriate uses of military power and the seemingly mundane rules and procedures that have become a battleground of power politics (Raymond 2019). These debates are not esoteric or legal-technical debates about jurisprudence; they shape how and when actors determine it is acceptable to use military power.

One key way lawfare matters is by legally conditioning the battlefield, thus determining what uses of military power are viewed as legitimate and acceptable. One clear example of this is status of forces agreements (SFAs), which define the legal status of military forces deployed in friendly states (Morrissey 2011). These agreements are also crucial in regulating the circulation of military forces, which is necessary in order to use that military force. As negotiated by military lawyers, SFAs legally condition the battlefield by determining who may use what type of military power and how, if at all, international law applies (Morrissey 2011: 284). Another example can be seen through the debate about the use of drones for "targeted killing." The United States believes that such drone strikes are consistent with the laws of war, whereas opponents claim that the strikes are illegal and that more restrictive forms of international human rights law should apply (Jones 2016: 226). At stake is legal permission and normative approval to use this form of military power.

Legal conditioning of the battlefield extends to seemingly mundane debates about what to call the use of military force in a given scenario. For example, was the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 an act of war, a territorial conquest, or, as Putin would like to claim, a "special military operation" (Gazit and Grassiani 2023; Osborn and Nikolskaya 2022: 4)? This matters, because a "war" invokes different legal and normative obligations than nonwar. In nonwar uses of military force, how should actors distinguish between combatant and uninvolved civilian? What criteria catapult someone into the "combatant" category and make them a legitimate target of military force? Understanding lawfare as applied to nonwar also highlights potential gaps between legal and *legitimate* uses of military power. Gazit and Grassiani (2023) point out that legitimacy is often "liquid" in that the use of military force is often shaped by structures, institutions, and narratives that are dynamic and nonlinear. Legitimately using legal force can be tied to its legality, but it does not have to be. As Guzzini and Klausen explain, legitimate uses of military power can come from constitutive processes and performativity, drawing on shared understandings about social reality and world politics. Understanding how these processes manifest through lawfare helps us explain

how actors choose which type of military power to employ from their wider menu of options.

This question of legality and legitimacy becomes even more complicated considering the rise of private military corporations (PMCs) that often act on behalf of state governments but are distinct, free-market corporations. PMCs often operate in the "shadows of legality," even as they create foundational shifts in global security governance (Abrahamsen and Williams 2009: 8). Who governs PMCs, and what, if any, international legal obligations are they bound to? While the 2008 Montreaux Document created a legal and normative framework for the use of PMCs, states continue to employ PMCs for less-than-legitimate uses of military force that often violate human rights and other norms that the state itself would not (Avant 2016: 336; Cohen 2005; Hauer 2018). Lawfare is an increasingly important domain that demonstrates the broader political and social forces that affect the use of military power.

Using military power as signal

A growing body of literature examines how actors can use the tools of military power to send signals. Often these signals are sent for coercive purposes: actors signal their capabilities and resolve through military exercises or movements. However, signals more often draw on shared understandings that affect an actor's status and image. Using military power to send signals highlights the constitutive processes of power politics, or what Guzzini and Klausen explain as the social conventions with which power is measured and the ways that using military power can constitute different types of relations.

One of the most common signaling uses of military power is for coercion, by establishing commitments, making threats, and demonstrating resolve. Military parades, military exercises, and mobilizations of force are some of the ways that states think they send these signals (Montgomery 2020; Press 2007; Slantchev 2005). However, what "counts" as communicating resolve depends on tacit sociological assumptions. For example, deterrence only works when the rules of the game are understood and shared between actors (Adler 2010; George and Smoke 1974). Demonstrations of military power have a wide repertoire of meanings; the message received will depend on political relationships and context (Cohen 1981; Spindel 2025). Some demonstrations of military power are designed to communicate that a state occupies a particular role in global politics. For example, Sylvanus Olympio, president of Togo from 1960 to 1966 said, "We cannot be an independent nation without an army of some sort" (quoted in Eyre and Suchman 1996: 79). This sentiment is not unique to Togo; states often acquire just a handful of advanced weaponry, such as main battle tanks, supersonic fighter jets, or submarines, with little ability or intention of using them (Durch 2000: 14; Eyre and Suchman 1986: 10; Laurance 1992: 38). While these weapons will not have much use in an

actual war, they can put on an impressive air show or be part of a military parade. Acquiring and displaying military power is one way for states to claim a role, whether that is independent nation or great power status. Wendt and Barnett describe this as "symbolic self-completion": states display their military power to show that they have the trappings of a modern state (Wendt and Barnett 1993: 336). The tools of military power never just exist, value-free, in the world; they have socially constructed meanings and functions, which broadens the uses of military power beyond war.

Outsourcing the use of military power

As mentioned earlier, states have increasingly turned to PMCs to conduct military and related action. Sometimes, these are domestically focused uses of force, such as the employment of PMCs to protect extractive industries like diamond mining and oil extraction (Abrahamsen and Williams 2009). Other times, states will outsource core fighting activities to PMCs. More than half of the personnel deployed by the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan from 2003 to 2011 were private contractors, and Russia has used the Wagner Group PMC in operations across multiple continents (Avant and de Nevers 2011: 88; Banco, Aarup, and Carrier 2023).

Outsourcing the use of military power to private actors can carry legal, normative, and economic benefits for states. Legally and normatively, using PMCs can allow states to take military action that might otherwise invite international opprobrium by introducing distance between the state government and the actor using military power (Chesterman 2008; Marten 2019). Many believe that outsourcing military operations to private companies comes with cost and efficiency savings (Avant and de Nevers 2011; Brooks and Laroia 2005). Even when PMCs aren't directly used in combat, they do take on roles traditionally the responsibility of state militaries, such as operational support, military advice and training (for foreign domestic forces or foreign allied militaries), and logistical support (Abrahamsen and Williams 2009: 12; Avant 2023). The result of this use of military power is an increase in the number of actors who have power over and around the use of military force.

Cooperative uses of military power

Military power can be used in more cooperative ways, which challenges assumptions that military power is created primarily for belligerent purposes. Peacekeeping and humanitarian operations are among the most prominent examples and demonstrate the sociological foundations to the uses of military power. As Finnemore explains, the acceptable use of military power across borders has changed over time to prioritize protecting people from violence rather than territorial capture and control (Finnemore 2

004: 52–53). China's increased participation in cooperative peacekeeping missions, for example, can be explained by changing international norms and domestic perspectives on China's role in the international community (Chen 2009; Li 2011). The changing use of military power for humanitarian purposes shows how changes in shared logics of appropriateness shape state action. It is not the balance of power but rather the desire to participate in the creation of shared meaning that drives action.

Another example of cooperative uses of military power is disaster relief. States use their militaries to respond to disasters including earthquakes, tsunamis, and health disasters at home and abroad (Capie 2015; Michaud et al. 2019). Using military power to participate in disaster relief efforts is one way for states to claim particular roles and project images to others. Taiwan, for example, uses military disaster relief response to increase its international engagement and gain international recognition and status (Engstrom 2013: 44). The crises caused by the global coronavirus pandemic in 2020 also provided an opportunity for states to use their militaries for domestic disaster relief. In many European states, the military's organizational and logistic power was used to provide additional medical capacity, for transport of key supplies, and to enforce national lockdowns (Pepe and Lapo 2020; Smith-Spark and Davey-Atlee 2020). In addition to logistics and enforcement, the pandemic has also given many militaries an opportunity to demonstrate their medical research prowess, showcasing yet another use of military power. In China, for example, army research scientists had a major role in the development of China's coronavirus vaccine (Lewis 2020; Shepherd and Xueqiao 2020).

The nonconflict uses of military power make Guzzini and Klausen's charge of conceptual clarity and coherence more difficult. Not everything should be seen through a power lens, but the actual practices of acquiring and using military power now stretch far beyond the battlefield. From the legal debates, to the symbolic signaling uses of military instruments, to cooperative uses, military power shapes much of world politics, both directly and indirectly. Guzzini and Klausen introduced a broad definition of military power ("all that is needed to sustain a war effort"); but the empirical uses of military power raise questions about the completeness of that definition. For example, should a military's participation in or contributions to scientific research be considered? What about cases where a state has some tools of military power but uses those tools for air shows and to signal modern statehood? On the other hand, should we measure military power according to the security imaginaries that would affect it uses? Should we rank two states with similar arsenals differently if one state has an imaginary that sees war as risk management and the other has an imaginary that pushes it toward great power competition? To include all of these dimensions would risk the circular arguments warned about in the lead essay. Nonetheless, our conceptualizations of military power should reflect its actual uses.

Consequences of building and using military power

The wide-ranging consequences of building and using military power are due to the symbolic and relational aspects of military power. This section highlights some of the less-considered consequences of military power, including the spread of weapons and ideas about war, reification of gender roles, and the shift in competition to the legal and technocratic domains.

Because military power can be used for purposes other than war, the instruments of military power have wider circulation than they might otherwise. The signaling function of military power—the ways that states use the possession or transfer of weapons to project images and communicate messages—means that states are driven to obtain the tools of military power to project the image of a modern state, a great power, or other role they can communicate by copying the arsenals and organizational structure of the states with which they want to be associated. This drive toward isomorphism means that actors will seek military power for reasons other than its instrumental or battlefield value. The tools of military power also circulate more widely because of their use in communicating messages. Actors that do not need—at least in terms of battlefield usage—certain types of weapons will still seek and send them because of the messages about political alignment that these weapons send (Spindel 2023). The symbolic meaning of military power, not the balance of power, is responsible for this behavior.

As the tools of military power spread, so do the ideas about how to use them. Weapons obtained for image projection or signaling purposes have the secondary consequence of spreading and reinforcing security imaginaries. States begin to mimic not just the arsenals, but the force structures and preparedness of one another, which carries with it ideas about threats and using military power (King 2011; Schmitt 2020). The longer-term consequences of the spread of security imaginaries depends on the content of those imaginaries. The war-as-risk-management imaginary leads to continuous use of military power since risk can never be eliminated and will likely lead to an unending series of military interventions justified as risk management (Schmitt 2020: 406–407). If the flow of weapons carries with it the spread of security imaginaries like this one, then using military power is likely to become even more common as states interpret events through the lens of their risk-management security imaginary.

Regardless of why states seek military power, this act can lead to the reification of gender dynamics and gender roles. Despite women's presence in many state and nonstate militaries, war is still largely viewed as a "heroic activity" of masculinized male soldiers saving and protecting innocent women and children (Dunivin 1994: 537; Lane 2017: 470; Wilcox 2009: 220). Masculinity is baked in to the purpose and culture of the military. When military power is the go-to tool of states, the combat mission and masculinity of military force are centered and privileged. The more military power is used to accomplish national goals, the more this masculinity becomes an inherent and

natural part of doing international politics. Military power is still the domain of manly man, and its use for broader purposes spreads the image of the manly man as the do-er of world politics.

The masculine-as-default can be seen in something as simple as weapons development. Take the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, Lockheed Martin's advanced stealth fighter jet. The F-35, like most tools of military power, was produced to masculine specifications. The US Air Force had to restrict lighter-weight pilots from flying the F-35, because its ejection mechanism and the weight of the pilot's helmet could lead to "debilitating injuries and even death" during the ejection process (Browne 2017; Pierce 2015). The restrictions meant that women pilots, and slimmer men, could not fly the plane because their body types were not considered during the construction of the F-35 (Mizokami 2018). Seeing men's bodies as the default and natural operator of weapons reinforces the perceptions that military power is the domain of men, and women (and less masculinized men) are trespassers who do not belong.

The masculinity of the military is in interesting tension with the increasing legalization of the battlefield. Law and lawyers are not the masculinized archetype of military personnel. They often engage in the logistical work that is associated with women and the more feminine. As this becomes an increasingly large part of military power, there will be consequences for military culture and gender roles as well as the interpretation and reinterpretation of rules and norms about using military power. Lawfare will also have the consequence of differentiating between actors who can take part in the legal battles and those actors without the resources or ability to engage in these debates. Standards for appropriate use of military power will be set by a cohort of states that can keep up in this arms race of expertise.

Both the legalization of the battlefield and the signaling function of military power can create their own stakes for using military power. Belief in the deterrence imaginary led states to fight wars for the sake of deterrence, which is surely a perversion of deterrence. Though successful deterrence means war is avoided, states' preoccupation with military power means that using military power is seen as the best way to demonstrate resolve and capabilities. Building and using military power can create its own internal stakes for deterrence, reputation, and role, which can push actors into a military conflict they would have otherwise preferred to avoid (Freedman 1998: 42; Krebs and Spindel 2018). Similarly, choosing whether or not to use military power of a specific type in a given situation will be one way that states try to solidify and spread their interpretation of legal and appropriateness standards.

Increasing use of PMCs brings consequences for global governance and power. The massive increase in size and scope of PMC operations—estimated to reach $167.12 billion by 2025, more than triple what it was in 1990 (Avant 2023)—represents a significant shift in who uses power and who controls the use of military power. First, the rise of PMCs represents a shift toward more free-market and capitalist logics of military power, where the group that can perform the task for the lowest amount and in

the quickest amount of time will get the job. A likely consequence is that military power is no longer the sole purview of states or international governmental organizations. PMCs, with their profit-driven organizational goals, will have an increasing footprint. The free-market logic creates a second, less immediately visible consequence of using military power. Outsourcing to PMCs represents, as White noted, the transfer of "formerly sovereign military functions from state to market" through complex processes and global assemblages (White 2018: 536). PMCs are not beholden to international law or customary norms in the same way as states and, indeed, experience consequences of violating laws and norms quite differently, meaning that continued use of PMCs could weaken international governance and regulations on the use of military power. Rather than a contestation about sovereign rights and norms, using PMCs shifts the debate to be about free market logics and monetary costs and benefits. As this discursive shift demonstrates, the consequences of building and using military power go beyond power asymmetries and domination. Scholars should pay particular attention to the ways that military power can generate its own internal logics and how it can affect societal relations and global behavioral standards.

Military power and nonstate actors

This chapter has primarily analyzed military power in terms of state actors. That is in part for practical reasons, as states more commonly have uniformed militaries and access to the major conventional weapons that are key sources of military power. In rankings of military power, nonstate actors do not come close to the power level of states. However, nonstate actors often have armed wings and engage in conflict. Understanding how nonstate actors make and use military power can help us further refine the concept. In brief, studying the military power of nonstate actors highlights the importance of narratives and rhetoric and the role of structure and organization in generating and determining how to use military power. Studying nonstate actors also highlights the challenges of studying military power: actors with more military power have more political power and can assume roles such as education provision and medical care usually associated with state governments. These roles can, in turn, help the nonstate actor recruit and generate support among a civilian population, which again risks explaining political order by military power and military power by political order.

Nonstate actors are limited in their ability to source military power because they do not have the production capacity or budgets of states. While states can try to build their own domestic defense industry or buy weapons from other states, nonstate actors do not have the same options. They are additionally limited by export laws, which frequently prohibit the sale of major conventional weapons to actors other than state governments. However, nonstate actors are often less interested in acquiring major conventional

weapons and more interested in acquiring small arms and light weapons (SALW). SALWs are much harder to track and count and often traverse the globe through illicit flows, meaning that measuring nonstate-actor military power based on an accurate count of their arsenals is a difficult, if not impossible, task. While the instruments of military power may differ between states and nonstate actors, many other dimensions are the same.

One of the similarities between state and nonstate military power is in the importance of narratives and rhetoric. This is perhaps even more important for nonstate actors, who often do not have national territory to rely on and instead have to create messages of cohesion and political community. The information revolution has significantly increased the reach of nonstate actors, who can now use the internet and social media to both target potential recruits and craft and control messages about their group and its goals (Cronin 2019; Kohlmann 2006). Social media has amplified the network dynamics nonstate groups relied on to recruit new members.

Like states, nonstate groups also vary in their ability to create and use military power based on internal and external factors. Nonstate militant groups have their own sets of civil–military relations, which produce categories of fighters, soldiers, and staff that contribute to the structure and organization of the group and that can affect its ability to adopt and use weapons and tactics (Horowitz 2010a; Parkinson 2013; Staniland 2014; Stewart 2020). These internal factors affect the potential military power of the group and, as is the case with states, often rely on women for the crucial logistical and support roles (Bond et al. 2019; Parkinson 2013). Looking externally, nonstate actors make alliances with states and nonstate actors alike. Alliances with states frequently take the form of a patron–client relationship, and the state can exert significant control over the decisions of the nonstate group (DeVore 2012; see also Thaler 2021). Iran, for example, has given significant financial and material support to Hezbollah, including the provision of unmanned aerial vehicles, which gives Iran some influence over the decisions Hezbollah makes (Byman 2006; Hanna 2021). Alliances with other nonstate groups, by contrast, are often driven by shared ideologies (Blair et al. 2020; Gade et al. 2019; Popovic 2018). Scholars interested in studying nonstate-actor alignment and conflict can make use of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) databases on nonstate conflict issues and actors, and external support in nonstate conflict. The Nonstate Actors in Armed Conflict Dataset, managed by Peace Research Institute Oslo is another valuable source of empirical evidence (Cunningham et al. 2013).

Nonstate actors use their military power for a wide range of goals, with mixed records of success. Nonstate actors who use their military power are more often invited to the negotiating table. Engaging in violence, particularly violence against civilians, can be part of an outbidding strategy that nonstate actors use to draw attention to themselves, gain more negotiating leverage, and attract new recruits (Conrad and Greene 2015; Thomas 2014; Walter and Kydd 2006). Most existing analyses of nonstate actors' military power focus on decisions to use or to forgo terror tactics (e.g. Abrahms

2008; Fortna 2015; Polo and Gleditsch 2016). Newer research that examines the organization and structure of nonstate militant actors (Parkinson 2021; Parkinson and Zaks 2018), as well as nonstate tactics and strategy (Biddle 2021) are welcome additions to the study of military power and its use in nonstate actors.

Conclusion

When our conceptualizations of military power become too broad, everything can be analyzed in terms of how it contributes to the building or use of military power. Yet, narrow conceptualizations fall short, too, since military power is much more than tabulations of force or war-fighting. Our task is to understand what military power is in a way that enables systematic analysis, without incorporating too many factors that the concept becomes unrecognizable or unmeasurable. To achieve this balance, I suggest two steps.

First, scholars should focus on factors more directly related to the military. We might consider this a "yes, and" approach to studying military power. This approach does not discard work that has come before but, instead, seeks to understand *how* factors are related to military power. For example, instead of including a measure of demographics or of economic power in our analyses, we should be more explicit about understanding how these factors affect military power. Demographics are complicated and interesting, and more focused analyses will pay attention to civil–military relations: Is the public supportive of the military? Is the military all-volunteer or conscripted, and if the former, what is the likelihood that conscription could actually occur? Are civilian and military leaders in sync, or are they more often at odds? Similarly, how actors will translate their economic power into military power will depend on security imaginaries and perceptions: What types of threats do they imagine, and how do they conceptualize conflict? The "yes, and" approach addresses the challenges of the lead essay by reeling in our conceptualizations of military power while examining the social and relational processes that are crucial to it.

The second step to move forward is to put greater emphasis on the meanings and perceptions that affect military power, rather than taking the instruments or uses of military power as objective or inherent. This will mean refocusing on the processes of acquiring or using military power, rather than the outcomes. We could measure military power by looking at the weapons to which each actor has access. But such an approach would cut out the nonconflict reasons for acquiring weapons and would have us overlook the meanings that actors attach to weapons. It is only because of shared understandings that main battle tanks, supersonic fighters, and submarines are indicators of great power status. For many states, acquiring these weapons makes more signaling sense than it does military/conflict sense, even if the end result is that multiple actors have similar arsenals. Similarly, law relating to military actions is a site of contestation

and innovation; we should pay just as much attention to how that contestation unfolds as we should to the end result. The process of interpretation, production, and reproduction is one way that actors exercise their military power. Yet another example is in studying doctrine. Doctrinal publications are a rich resource for scholars looking to understand how actors prepare to use their military power. But analyses must be aware of the security imaginaries and perceptions that shaped the final document.

What makes military power exciting, and difficult, to study are the social, symbolic, and constitutive processes that create it. By thinking about military power in terms of its sources, uses, and consequences, we begin to see that military power is a political and social project that remakes actors and relations between actors and has (even when war does not occur) a significant effect on the shape and direction of international politics.

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CHAPTER 34

SYMBOLIC POWER

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INTRODUCTION

A key commitment of International Political Sociology (IPS) scholarship is to uncover dynamics of *symbolic power*, or systems and instruments of domination that enshrine power relations as legitimate and seemingly natural. Symbolic power, developed and continuously refined by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu since his early writings, identifies hidden forms of domination that are not problematized and recognized for what they are: arbitrary impositions of representations of the social world by dominant actors. Symbolic power invites an analysis of the emergence and legitimation of social order produced through struggles between competing visions of the social world held by multiple actors. Such social orders are not easily mapped onto familiar international or global orders but, as exemplified in IPS scholarship, come about in empirical investigations of diverse social practices, actors, and spaces that are connected through transversal lines that cut across scales such as the local, national, or international. As Basaran et al. (2017) note, it is precisely this departure from established disciplinary social visions of orders that IPS seeks to encourage: "How could it be possible to find transversal lines that might resist the entrenched categorisations that seemed to affirm an idealized and even nostalgic view of social and political orders that were clearly under immense stress, not to say falling apart?" (Basaran et al. 2017: 2).

Guzzini and Klausen argue in the lead chapter to this part that one genealogy of IPS is rooted in International Relations (IR) scholarship by dissenting voices of the late 1980s who critically engaged disciplinary IR from within (see also Basaran et al. 2017: 2). Building on such moves, IPS has created a creative space to develop alternative, transdisciplinary approaches to think about the international not as linear or monocausal but "transversal: criss-crossing and generating diverse, plural and transnational social and political practices" (Basaran et al. 2017: 4; see also Hoffmann 2022). In this chapter, I seek to show how Bourdieu's symbolic power allows us to make visible such transversal lines that are generative of creative research that unveils unexpected connections, symbolic orders, and the mechanisms that maintain or challenge them. While connected to legitimation, as I will show in this chapter by analyzing the Weberian influence in Bourdieu's analysis of the symbolic, it also goes beyond it. It

does so by centering the notion of "common sense," which places attention on the intrinsically hierarchical and taken-for-granted aspects of social worlds and how they sustain legitimacy by misrecognizing "their fundamentally arbitrary character" (see Swartz 2013: 81). It invites us to study regimes of justification, internalized routines, and forms of domination that are predicated upon the tacit agreement of the dominated while empowering particular groups over others.

At its core, IPS is committed to a sociology of practices and power relations that studies trajectories of authorization of particular actors, practices, and legitimate forms of speech. By identifying "fissures in the walls" of disciplinary boundaries, IPS is interested in these small, often unnoticed moments of transformation and struggles for power that point to social change (Basaran et al. 2017: 4). Guzzini and Klausen, in the lead chapter, identify symbolic power in moments of "unconscious adjustment of subjective structures (categories of perception) to objective structures." In other words, it is a form of power analysis that seeks to uncover the mechanisms that lead to *doxic* acceptance. Doxa, a concept that frequently appears in Bourdieu and Bourdieusian-inspired scholarship, circumscribes an unconsciously internalized vision of the social world and its rules of the game and norms as an unquestioned orthodoxy or self-evident truth. While Guzzini and Klausen focus on recognition, this chapter will analyze the roots of Bourdieu's interest for the symbolic dimension of social life and how he refined his understanding of symbolic power as the making and imposition of visions of the social world that come to be seen as legitimate. I will trace this evolving understanding in various strands of IPS scholarship, its developments, and potential future lines of inquiry based on his engagement with Weber's work on the sociology of religion. Before doing so, I will briefly sketch Bourdieu's understandings of symbolic power.

The symbolic dimension of social life

A huge variety of symbolic instruments and dimensions permeate Bourdieu's work, spanning fields as diverse as academic knowledge production (1988, 2000), language (1991), art (1996), the formation of social groups and the production of myths and ideologies (see Wacquant 2005), to name but a few. This malleability of symbolic power is also mirrored in IPS scholarship, which has drawn upon the concept and developed it further in new settings. But what is symbolic power and how has it evolved?

Since Bourdieu's early writings, there has been a clear sense that symbolic power is connected to the production of consensus, or stronger, *doxa*. It is a relational form of power, which is produced through interactions between dominant and dominated social groups, misrecognized as legitimate, located in a social space, and (in his earlier work) limited to the realm of ideology and language. His later work and IPS scholarship

expand the empirical horizon of this analysis. Three key influences on Bourdieu's analysis of symbolic power are worth highlighting: his critical analysis of "pure" linguistics, his engagement with Max Weber's sociology of religion and his ethnographic studies of Algeria during its war of independence against the French colonial power, which I will draw upon in different parts of this chapter.

Bourdieu describes symbolic power as "a power to construct reality" with a corresponding knowledge order around this reality (Bourdieu 1979: 79). As an inherently social type of power, it creates solidarities between actors when a symbolic system and its representational categories are shared and reproduced in symbolic struggles between actors over the legitimate definition of the social world. These representations "are arbitrary but not recognised as such" (Bourdieu 1979: 80). Moreover, adding an element of performativity, Bourdieu describes symbolic power as the "power to constitute the given by stating it," which not only "confirm[s] or transform the world view" but also circumscribes the possible strategic space for action on the world (Bourdieu 1979: 82). He moves from mental and representational categories to a logic of practice that is constituted in its imposition. This imbues it with a force of a "quasi-magical power," which helps actors "obtain the equivalent of what is obtained" by physical or economic force (Bourdieu 1979: 82).

However, as Bourdieu highlights numerous times, the force of symbolic power cannot be identified by just analyzing the force of speech. This force must be identified in the relationship between those who hold symbolic power and those who are subjected to it. It is a social relation embedded in the structure of the field, which is a structured space of social relations and which attracts various actors who compete for dominant positions in this social space. These actors are drawn in by the stakes of this field and have internalized the rules of the game. In fact, struggles over symbolic power play out over language. This is evident in Bourdieu's engagement with theories of linguistics in the works of Austin, Saussure, and Chomsky, where language can often appear to have an autonomous force. For Bourdieu, meaning in language cannot be found in its formal structure, such as grammar. Instead, he centered linguistic relations of power (Wacquant and Bourdieu 1989: 46) as

> even the simplest linguistic exchange brings into play a complex and ramifying web of historical power relations between the speaker, endowed with a specific social authority, and an audience, which recognizes this authority to varying degrees, as well as between the groups to which they respectively belong.

A successful speech act is produced in the trajectories of the authorized speaker and their social links with audiences and other social groups. Therefore, the success of an Austinian speech act is rooted in *social* conditions, or "acts of institution that cannot be sanctioned unless they have, in some way, the whole social order behind them" (Bourdieu 1991: 74). Its force is tied to the "linguistic habitus," socially constructed dispositions that build the capacity to speak "correctly" in any given social setting. This is structured by what Bourdieu terms the linguistic market, which imposes "a system of

specific sanctions and censorships" (Bourdieu 1991: 37). His analysis combines economic structure and linguistic competence, which had previously been thought of as separate approaches in linguistics. The official language of a political unit exerts symbolic power over the whole population when it is imposed as the only legitimate language. It is also closely intertwined with the genesis of the state and its social uses, materialized in official dictionaries that standardize language (Bourdieu 1991: 45). This symbolic domination is upheld by those who recognize the official language as legitimate. Far from "cynical calculation or consciously experienced constraint," it is achieved through the slow and gradual inculcation of dispositions, which are practiced through, for example, pronunciation (Bourdieu 1991: 51).

Finally, as I have noted elsewhere, the figure of the spokesperson is central in Bourdieu's work on language and symbolic power (Hoffmann 2024). The spokesperson embodies the "mystery of ministry" through the social magic of a performative utterance (Bourdieu 1991: 65). Through this phrase, which Bourdieu took from Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies*, Bourdieu underlined the magic of "the office," which creates the delegated power of the spokesperson. To him, this means that the power of words "is nothing other than the *delegated power* of the spokesperson" (1991: 107). The spokesperson embodies the accumulated symbolic capital that was entrusted to it by the group that delegated their speech to this figure, whom they recognized as the "authorised representative" (Bourdieu 1991: 111). The words of an authorized spokesperson can have a particularly destructive effect on symbolic orders: "all forms of symbolic capital —prestige, charisma, charm—and the relations of exchange through which this capital accumulates—the exchange of services, gifts, attention, care, affection—are particularly vulnerable to the destructive effect of words which expose and disenchant" (Bourdieu 1991: 128).

In sum, Bourdieu places symbolic power in relation to other forms of power that are derived from different capitals that actors hold. Capital, briefly stated, is a form of power resource that can be acquired in various material and symbolic forms, such as cultural, economic, or social. Its value is socially produced and dependent on the context (to relate this to other forms of power, see Axster and Danewid in this volume for corporeal power, Eagleton-Pierce in this volume for economic power, and Spindel for military power in this volume). Different forms of capital can be converted into more or less valued forms of capital. Symbolic power is often studied as the result of capital conversion, which "transmute" different forms of capital into symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1991: 83). Symbolic power is also important in relation to Bourdieu's analysis of fields, a key concept in his work. Fields can be described as structured social spaces, which are organized around specific stakes and attract actors through a "magnetic force" (Bigo 2011: 239) to compete over these stakes. The struggles take place over specific capital, which is valued by these actors, and over the "definition of the most legitimate form of capital for a particular field" (Swartz 2013: 35). This can be generally understood as the struggle over symbolic power. It is found in processes of

"dissimulation" or concealment of violence through its misrecognition as legitimate. As Leander notes, this form of power is most effective when it is represented as disinterested and unrelated to any social hierarchies (Leander 2008: 13). The most benign or banal practices can contribute most to the perpetuation of symbolic violence and power relations. With this brief outline in mind, how has symbolic power informed IPS scholarship?

Symbolic power in IPS scholarship

Scholars in IPS have brought symbolic power to new frontiers. Initially, it has been particularly fruitful in "traditional" high-political realms of IR such as security, diplomacy, and international law. What connects the studies reviewed below is not only a commitment to uncovering taken-for-granted symbolic orders and naturalized power structures but also a rigorous methodological approach to the study of symbolic power, combining dozens if not hundreds of interviews, biographical analysis, fieldwork, and other materials on the social worlds they seek to theorize. They are also concerned with what has been theorized as transnational power elites by Niilo Kauppi and Mikael Mad sen (2013). These elites, rooted simultaneously in national and international settings, become constituted as such through a combination of various forms of symbolic capital, such as superior knowledge or status and material assets. However, the main goal is to study not only their professional spaces and practices but also the political consequences of their rise (Kauppi and Madsen 2013: 3). This entails tracing how they position themselves at national and international levels as well as the specific resources they are capable of mobilizing and which are recognized as legitimate. Symbolic power here is derived from expert, cultural, or network power (see also Sending 2015). In the following, I will excavate its use in scholarship on (in)security, diplomacy, and international law.

(In)security and symbolic power

Scholars in critical security studies have been inspired by Bourdieusian concepts, which lend themselves well to the study of fields of (in)security, the emergence of new security actors, and the practices of naming objects of security (see also Huysmans 200 2). Without offering an exhaustive list, I provide a few examples of the diverse ways in which symbolic power has generated new research agendas. In the C.A.S.E. (Critical Approaches to Security in Europe) Collective manifesto (2006), it is the power to name and delineate particular objects, such as security, in a social space of security professionals. This approach unveiled new protagonists such as border guards, customs, or immigration officers, who act in the name of security and who had previously been neglected as security actors in their own right. This understanding of

symbolic power as the power to name and to produce dominant representations of the social world has parallels with Bourdieu's critique of the speech act, which focuses on a narrow understanding of power. Following from this, Bigo (2006) exposed a security doxa emerging after 9/11, which has merged external and internal security as a result of such institutional games and security practices. Symbolic power as doxa is perpetuated by various Western security professionals through a narrative of global insecurity. Bigo shows how this narrative has come to enjoy "great credibility and can present itself as a common and unchallenged truth, a base for elaboration, and not a subject for discussion" (Bigo 2006: 387). Private military companies are another example of previously neglected actors who have accumulated security agenda-setting power. Leander (2005) analyses how these security actors reconstructed understandings of security that have shifted the location of power and authority from the public to the private sphere. In Berling's (2011) analysis, processes of securitization take place at the interface between science and security in which scientific knowledge and its objectivizing power generates a particular kind of symbolic capital.

Symbolic power has also been deployed in sites such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), previously thought of in military and strategic terms rather than through the lens of culture. One such example is Williams' (2006) work, which introduces Bourdieu's symbolic power to constructivist security studies. He seeks to recover the strategic nature of culture, which is often separated from security understood in material terms. Symbolic power, he argues, precisely serves this purpose, which is constructed through cultural and symbolic forms of capital (Williams 2006: 33). He excavates the origins of symbolic power in symbolic systems such as language or knowledge. Cultural power is rooted in claims to expertise and knowledge, while symbolic power is linked to being recognized as authoritative, based on "structures of perception and categorization, appraisal and appreciation," with both forms of power often combined (Williams 2006: 49). He uses this framework to analyze NATO as a site in which cultural and symbolic power is produced, reproduced, and exercised. Social magic, making a social reality by saying it, "is tied to the institutional and organisational structures through which the words are transformed into social acts" (Williams 2006: 64). This allows him to study the transformation of NATO from an alliance responding to geopolitical threats to one which expresses "a value-based civilizational structure, participation in it and relations towards it" (Williams 2006: 76).

Pouliot (2010) also operationalizes symbolic power in his analysis of NATO–Russia relations as a process of inter-state pacification. Symbolic power sheds light on how the terms of interaction around peace and security between representatives of both sides are defined. These in-depth empirical analyses uncover how different forms of capital build symbolic power and transform even the most traditional and hierarchical professional spaces. He conceptualizes diplomacy as a form of doxa, aiming to build a peaceful common sense that is predicated upon the absence of war. This symbolic power to impose legitimate meanings of social realities on actors "turns a zero-sum

struggle for defining reality and morality into something that has all the attributes of a win-win relationship: interstate peace" (Pouliot 2010: 45). To analyze NATO–Russia relations as a symbolic struggle over the terms of the relationship, he links symbolic power to a logic of practicality, which takes places at the subconscious level. Actors have a sense for the rules of the game they engage in without having to actively think about it. Through this logic practicality, NATO and Russia struggle over symbolic power to build the capacity to redefine the doxic rules of the game.

Berling (2012) offers another example of how to theorize symbolic transformations of European security after the Cold War through Bourdieusian tools. She employs symbolic power through different forms of capital and doxa to attend to "power practices behind norms and discourses" (Berling 2012: 454). Doxa is central in her analysis, denoting "the unspoken, common knowledge that constitutes social reality" (Berling 2012: 455). She develops an "action framework," combining the Bourdieusian concepts of "field–capital–agency–doxa" to study how boundaries of a field are set, agency is selected, and power struggles are animated (Berling 2012: 459). This approach allows her to uncover new social ties that emerged between military actors and research centers and think tanks. This resulted in what she captures in the imagery of "doxic battles," when different types of capitals are mobilized "in a field in which fundamental assumptions (doxa) have been or are called into question" (Berling 2012: 471).

However, the analytical purchase of symbolic power is not limited to such high political contexts of (in)security. Stuvøy's (2010) study of crisis centers in Northwest Russia in the context of violence against women offers a feminist rendering of (in)security studies and symbolic power. Crisis centers themselves become sites of symbolic power as their central agents end up marginalizing security for women even though the centers "are designed and intended to produce security" (Stuvøy 2010: 402). Symbolic power points to the paradoxes of agents' best intentions, which might result, in practice, in the opposite effects. This also has to be understood in the context of the broader field of power, which entrusts social forces like law enforcement and state officials with significant powers. At the same time, while such centers do not provide physical shelters, their very symbolic presence creates a discursive space for victims to recreate a situation of security, all the while marginalizing it. Symbolic power simultaneously empowers and dominates those on whose behalf it is exercised. Unable to provide shelter due to lack of public funding, the spokespersons of the crisis centers suggest that women adjust their behavior to avoid confrontations and thereby cover up systemic weaknesses. Stuvøy's concern for the social position of the marginalized showcases the great affinities of feminist analytical tools and symbolic power.

Symbolic struggles in diplomacy

Diplomacy, a traditional elite professional field, has also been enriched by the introduction of a symbolic power lens. Adler-Nissen's contribution is exemplary in this regard. For example, her work (2014) on the competition between national and transnational foreign services in the European Union (EU) mobilizes symbolic power to shed light on the transformation of authority and its location in international politics. This is manifest through symbolic struggles to establish a new institutional body like the EU's external action service. By constructing a European diplomatic field that is not limited by the boundaries of the state, she retraces the contours of these struggles for symbolic power in a field that attracts both state and nonstate actors. She operationalizes this symbolic struggle over three dimensions: first, debates around the admission of new actors in the field; second, over the social positions of these new actors and incumbents as they accumulate what she terms "diplomatic capital"; and third, more broadly the classification struggles between these two types of actors over who and what makes a genuine diplomat (Adler-Nissen 2014: 667). This analysis of the transformation of diplomacy is part of a set of questions around state sovereignty and how it is articulated in relation to other forms of authority (Adler-Nissen 2013: 179). To understand a new form of diplomacy that challenges state sovereignty, Adler-Nissen recalls Bourdieu's historical analysis of the formation of the state, leading him to challenge Weber's famous definition of the state as defined by the accumulation of legitimate physical violence to "the monopolization of legitimate symbolic violence" (Adler-Nissen 2014: 183). The state's symbolic power over "structures of perception and cognition across society" manifests itself when various state representatives meet (Adler-Nissen 2014: 183). The symbolic struggle between old and new forms of diplomacy play out as the new diplomatic service seeks to legitimate itself through the symbolic power accumulated by states.

Kuus's (2015) analysis of diplomacy focuses on the role of informal resources in diplomatic practices, highlighting how diplomacy has become more transnational. This transformation is a result of the accumulation of various forms of symbolic resources as expressed in informal social relations, focusing on the taken-for-granted facets of diplomatic practice such as discernment, reputation, and charm (Kuus 2015: 368). She uses symbolic power to attend to the construction of social reality by agents who are embedded in material and symbolic structures. She remarks on the difficulty of studying symbolic power (Kuus 2015: 372):

> An empirical analysis of the daily work of symbolic power is rarely attempted because it is a difficult task methodologically. To investigate symbolic struggles is to analyze fleeting social alchemies. Things seem to happen naturally, via a kind of "natural reflex," to participants and observers alike.

In her work, she attends to this difficulty of identifying symbolic capital by studying its embodiment in dress codes and mannerisms as expressed by diplomats of various nationalities, family and educational backgrounds "to discern relations and hierarchies beyond formal institutional structures" (Kuus 2015: 379).

A more recent example of the purchase of symbolic power in the study of diplomacy is offered by Nair's (2019) theorization of face-saving in diplomacy as practiced by Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) diplomats. He combines Bourdieu's symbolic power and other tools with Goffman's micro practice of face-saving, which is often used by both scholars and diplomats "as a stand-in for reputation, credibility, and resolve on the stage of international politics" (Nair 2019: 677). Building on Bourdieu's symbolic power, Nair theorizes it as a social interaction, mired in power relations, which aims to avoid conflict and seeks to build symbolic orders (2019: 679). Symbolic power linked with micro practices of face-saving showcases how this form of practice seeks to produce the sacred self while maintaining symbolic boundaries of the self (Nair 2019: 681). This opens up interesting lines of inquiry in the study of diplomacy, elites, and other professional social groups around a redeployment of symbolic power that is cross-fertilized with other sociological concepts. It is less concerned with uncovering a form of doxa or symbolic struggles in relation to the state and but more in situated micro practices and their broader symbolic meanings for social orders, hierarchies and groups.

International law and new symbolic orders

International law is another important domain in which transformations of power structures and authority have taken place. Bourdieu himself briefly engaged with law and the broader juridical field (Bourdieu 1987a). This has opened up Bourdieusian-inspired studies of the emergence of transnational legal orders, most notably led by a series of co-authored publications by Dezalay and Garth on international arbitration (Dezalay and Garth 1996), the import and export of economic and legal expertise (Dezalay and Garth 2002), or the rise of a field of international human rights (Dezalay and Garth 2006). Their work uses hundreds of biographical interviews and collective biographical analysis to theorize the accumulation and emergence of various forms of symbolic resources and new symbolic capital like human rights law expertise. Through this, they theorize broader relations between law, knowledge, institutions, and the states, which they conceive of as symbolic fields. For example, they theorize the one-sided circulation and imposition of a particularly valued form of expertise and knowledge from the United States and Europe to Latin America as a form of "symbolic imperialism."

Symbolic power also plays out in European integration and EU law, illuminating dynamics that were previously neglected (e.g. Cohen 2007; Vauchez 2015; Kauppi 2018; Georgakakis 2019). For example, Vauchez (2008) analyses the central role of law in shaping European integration and government. By describing law through the language of religion, Vauchez (2008: 129) emphasizes its apparent symbolic force:

> What Law does to the interests of whom it takes charge seems to be irrelevant. It all occurs as if the literature had focused in detail on the foundations of this European legal "cathedral" while at the same time neglecting the worship that is practiced in that church: the properties and scope of Euro-law heavily depend on the specific clergy (of legal professionals) entitled to speak in the name of this specific religion (the European rule of law) and, therefore, monopolize the symbolic power with which it is endowed.

Elsewhere, he analyses the institution and interconnection of EU law with a European polity as a "miracle," which has created "one unique transnational polity that constitutes a relatively stable order of practice and meaning" (Vauchez 2015: 5). To him, this is a result of a historical process that has endowed EU law with unifying "brokering capacity" in light of Europe's complexity and heterogeneity. He traces key steps and actors in the making of a European legal field, combining a diverse set of empirical data such as biographical data, academic conferences, case law and legal commentary, controversies, interviews, archives, and "commemorative material" such as eulogies (Vauchez 2015: 10–11). This empirically informed study of European integration is another excellent example of how symbolic power can be used to study the emergence and delineation of a new symbolic object.

Building on this scholarship on transnational legal processes and emerging human rights expertise, Madsen (2011) has proposed a new research agenda on the study of human rights. He delineates this symbolic international object through Bourdieu's approach to reflexivity, constructing it autonomously from predetermined conceptual and disciplinary assumptions or a presumed universality. Any such object, reflexively constructed, needs to be placed within the broader power relations that produce it as a form of symbolic power, as part of processes that divide labor between law and politics and battles of its "legitimate form of production" (Madsen 2011: 263). Human rights as an object of study sits between practices of advocacy, philosophical meaning-makings and legal analysis, all of which endow it with various forms of symbolic power. Recent work has employed symbolic power to study the construction of "universals" such as human rights. Such studies propose to understand universality as a social space from which to proclaim the universal, inhabited by spokespersons who accumulate symbolic capital that becomes valued and allows them to be seen as universal voices for all. For example, in my own work (Hoffmann 2021), I uncovered United Nations (UN) special rapporteurs, independent human rights experts who become mandated by the UN to advocate on behalf of various human rights issues, as such experts whose voices are endowed with universality. This work combines an analysis of transnational power elites with sociolegal studies and a concern for symbolic power of the spokesperson to shed light on human rights struggles in transnational fields of power. In light of this existing scholarship, what new paths could be taken?

Emerging lines of inquiry: The Weberian influence in Bourdieu's symbolic power

Recent work on symbolic power in IPS scholarship has moved on from solely focusing on constructions of symbolic objects, uncovering taken-for-granted or *doxic* social orders or mechanisms that enshrine forms of domination as legitimate. It creatively combines social theoretical tools to excavate transdisciplinary questions, bringing IPS into dialogue with for example sociolinguistics (Mc Cluskey and Charalambous 2021; Caraccioli et al. 2020), socio-legal studies, and political theory (Hoffmann 2021), intelligence studies (Ben Jaffel et al. 2020; Ben Jaffel and Larsson 2022), or International Political Economy (IPE) (Eagleton-Pierce 2013 and in this volume). This final section introduces a brief sketch for new lines of inquiry in order to revitalize the study of symbolic power in IPS. To do so, I will return to Bourdieu's writings on symbolic power in his engagement with Max Weber. This Weberian influence, I argue, opens up new empirical areas and theoretical subjects as broad as democratic politics, legitimation, prophecy, activism, religion, war, capitalism, displacement, and "symbolic revolution." These topics showcase the entwinement of symbolic and material forms of power, how ethnographic studies help show how symbolic power struggles play out by simultaneously creatively subverting and legitimating dominant orders, and how the symbolic power dimension is not limited to processes of legitimation and reproduction of symbolic orders but can also help identify symbolic transformations.

Bourdieu was profoundly influenced by Max Weber's writings, as he noted in an interview from 2000. Particularly, Max Weber's sociology of religion pointed to the importance of the symbolic dimension of social life not as the "primary and ultimate" but intertwined with others. Religion, according to Bourdieu, is the symbolic par excellence. His engagement with Weber's work allows him to establish the forms and logics of symbolic interactions between various actors who belong to the religious field (Bourdieu 1971). In this field, symbolic power denotes the power to produce a "systematic message capable of giving a unitary meaning to life" (Weber 1978: 124). For example, analyzing karma, Weber notes how the established order is justified also with reference to the social position of each actor according to their social status in the caste system. Religious symbols mobilize and create social groups around a religious message. In the same interview on Weber's influence on his oeuvre, Bourdieu reflects on Weber's investigations of the religious field and the accumulation of symbolic capital. In contradistinction to his reflections on symbolic power and capital in the previous part of this chapter, where symbolic power is the outcome of capital conversion, he notes that symbolic capital "is the way in which capital begins to accumulate" initially, "eventually in order to be converted into other 'types' of capital" (Bourdieu 2000: 119). This accumulation of symbolic capital gives rise to conflicts and eventually different field logics. This is an interesting reversal of Bourdieu's earlier

reflections on symbolic capital and power, pointing to the important force of forms of capital beyond the traditional starting points of economic, cultural, or social capital. For example, work on so-called populist politics and transformations of democracy can benefit from these insights when theorizing political leaders and their claims to authenticity, a particular kind of symbolic capital, when they impose their voice as the voice of "the people" (Kustermans et al. 2022: 22).

In the religious field, capital is accumulated as a result of competition for religious power. Weber focuses on three types of protagonists in the religious field who are engaged in this symbolic struggle (Weber 1978): the prophet, the magician, and the priest. The prophet owes their existence in opposition to the priestly body, which embodies the institutionalized vision of the social world. The prophet is to the priest "as the discontinuous to the continuous, the extraordinary to the ordinary, the non-routine to the routine and the banal, in particular where the manner of performing his religious action is concerned" (Bourdieu 2011: 127). Imbued with this special form of power to break with the existing order, the prophet roots symbolic power in their own person, allowing them to mobilize lay social groups behind their vision. This ability to speak convincingly to the laity is what Bourdieu terms "the *initial accumulation of the capital of symbolic power*" (Bourdieu 2011: 130). This approach is different from Weber's focus on the prophet as "a purely individual bearer of charisma" (Weber 1978: 439). The prophet's authority is derived from "personal revelation and charisma", not the broader social conditions through which they accrue symbolic capital (Weber 1978: 440–444). Weber proceeds by analyzing the process of routinization of the prophetic movement and charisma, which results in the foundation of a religious community. This analysis of the social and symbolic order generated by the prophetic discourse prompts Bourdieu's investigations of social agents, who claim to speak with legitimacy in the name of a social whole in his lectures on the state (Bourdieu 2014). These reflections on the relationship between charisma, legitimate speech, and symbolic capital can broaden existing understandings of theories of legitimation in IR (Balzacq 2019; Goddard and Krebs 2015).

The central puzzle around the success of prophecy is but an entry point for Bourdieu to study the accumulation of symbolic capital. It is not the result of successful communication that makes explicit what was previously implicit but rooted in the broader economic and social conditions of its production. The force of prophetic discourse lies in its criticality, which challenges established authorities and their monopoly over symbolic power. This form of challenge is most likely to be successful in periods of "latent crisis." It is not a result of charisma but of a prophet's social biography and particular social origins. This turns the prophet into a particularly powerful spokesperson. We can link this theorization of the prophetic discourse with Berling's analysis of scientific spokespersons I briefly mentioned above. For example, medical anthropologist Caduff (2014) analyses how scientists often assume a role of charismatic prophets in public debates when they convey a message for the people,

produced against the background of an unknown future. Symbolic power enables a form of prophecy that can reconfigure theoretical understandings of temporalities and knowledge, an analysis that has so far been neglected.

Bourdieu's ethnographic studies of indigenous society in Algeria, where he was sent for military service in 1955 during Algeria's war of independence, offers another pathway into an empirically informed analysis of religious practices and symbolic orders (Calhoun 2006). He witnessed the profound transformations of agrarian societies through French colonialism; their integration into capitalist economic relations; and war, which displaced masses of peoples and profoundly transformed their way of life. He stayed on to teach at the University of Algiers and to conduct vast ethnographic work on this ongoing destruction of social structures, where he benefited from intellectual exchange with various Kabyle intellectuals, most notably Abdelmalek Sayad (Perez 2022; Yacine, Wacquant, and Ingram 2004: 494). His ethnographic work covered numerous themes, ranging through marriage laws, agriculture, Islamic law, family structure to the introduction of money, economic crises, and geography, intertwining the symbolic and material dimension as inseparable. Most notably, Bourdieu himself had to "renounce the prestigious symbolic capital of philosophy" and his disciplinary vision by placing primacy on empirical observation (Perez 2022; Yacine, Wacquant, and Ingram 2004: 494). He conceived of this work as "social service" and, as argued by Yacine and colleagues, turned ethnology into an "instrument of symbolic struggle" that is engaged with the world rather than an abstract academic discipline (Yacine, Wacquant, and Ingram 2004: 495). This trajectory intertwines symbolic power with emancipation and an activist understanding of academic inquiry as a form of resistance to domination, another potentially fruitful line of inquiry for IPS scholarship. In their critique of the colonial order, Sayad and Bourdieu sought to "construct modes of collective critique and mobilization" by fashioning knowledge production as a collective inquiry undertaken with scholars of various disciplines (Perez 2020: 1000). Later, Bourdieu would propose the notion of "the collective intellectual" on the basis of these early collaborations. Through their work in Algeria, Bourdieu and Sayad intended to shed light on how the social sciences framed the colonial order in order to offer instruments to uncover domination and to achieve social emancipation (Yacine, Wacquant, and Ingram 2004: 1002).

How does the symbolic feature concretely in this early ethnographic work? In *The Algerians* (1958), which Bourdieu published at the age of 28, he provides a systematic overview of various Indigenous peoples before describing the violence of colonization and war that was inflicted on them. He identifies family genealogy and ancestral worship as key symbolic "instruments," which hold together social units and pattern a broader social system (Bourdieu 1958: 98). He also describes in great detail the relationships between husbands and wives and the more hidden forms of authority and power behind seemingly clear delineations of power. For example, women belonging to tribes in the Shawia territory used the right to divorce, exclusively reserved to men, in

cunning ways by inciting their husbands to trigger a divorce. As Bourdieu notes, "the wife has a strong and real authority, although officially all authority is exercised by the husband" (Bourdieu 1958: 30). He identifies multiple such moments of symbolic struggles over an imposed order in which various actors play creatively with its rules all the while affirming its legitimacy.

This symbolic order, which was upheld both in peasant societies and imposed by the colonial order, came into sharp relief when the war of independence broke out. He analyzed this form of social uprooting, the breakage of the bond with land and agrarian rites and the transformation of traditional peasant economy with Sayad in *Uprooting* (Bourdieu and Sayad 1964). Symbolic violence was previously held invisible prior to the spectacle of physical violence. As Bourdieu noted, "all the masks and ambiguous expression were removed" (Bourdieu 1958: 151). War, as other manifestations of brute force, unveils the workings of symbolic power and its illegitimacy that was previously hidden. It profoundly and irrevocably transforms all aspects of the symbolic order.

Finally, in his reflections on Weber's influence, Bourdieu introduces the notion of "symbolic revolutions," another fruitful line of inquiry that has not yet been taken in IPS (Martin-Mazé 2017: 217). He uses this concept to analyze encounters between economically, religiously, and politically distinct polities and peoples: "all of a sudden they had to resolve ineluctably difficult questions, questions to which religion provided ready answers" (Bourdieu, Schultheis, and Pfeuffer 2011: 120). Such encounters between two different social worlds generate "symbolic revolutions" in which knowledge structures and philosophical thought becomes profoundly renewed (Bourdieu et al. 2011: 120–121):

> in the Greek societies, the big controversies over what is determined by nature or law; this comes to the surface when people—ultimately, tribes, which have different laws—encounter one another. If some do certain things in one way, and others do these things in another way, then you start having doubts: it does not have to be—that is, it is not necessarily—like this or like that.

He developed the notion of symbolic revolution in his work on the artistic field from the 1980s onwards, in his last lectures at the Collège de France on French painter Manet between 1998 and 2000, and an unfinished manuscript with his wife Marie-Claire Bourdieu. Symbolic revolution, Bourdieu argues, are similar to great religious revolutions, as they overturn "cognitive, and sometimes social, structures" (Bourdieu 2017: 3). They are particularly difficult to study as they impose "the very structures through which we perceive it" or, in other words, what goes without saying (Bourdieu 2017: 3). Manet occupies the role of a "heretic" who "defamiliarizes and upsets the public, its receptor, and throws them into a state of indignation; he scandalizes them and, at the same time, he leads them to articulate explicitly what it is that is commonplace" (Bourdieu 2017: 13). To attempt an investigation of this symbolic revolution, Bourdieu engages in a historical-sociological analysis of Manet's social biography and accumulation of various capitals, the symbolic order in which he

operated, and the space of reception such as art criticism. Symbolic revolution, thus analyzed, moves studies of the symbolic dimension away from reproduction and legitimation of domination to the terrain of radical transformations and change. The transformation of human rights into law can be one such object of analysis, which has had deep impacts on the practice of international law and national constitutions, academic legal training, and the relationship between sovereign power and the individual rights-bearing subject, to name but a few examples.

Conclusion

This chapter began by arguing that an analysis of the workings of symbolic power is one of the key commitments of IPS scholarship. Instead of reproducing well-known orders such as the international system, IPS espouses a transversal approach that cuts through established hierarchies, disciplines, and spaces. Symbolic power is one such tool that helps make visible transversal lines through creative, transdisciplinary research. In short, symbolic power is the power to legitimate social orders and their categories of perception that dominant actors impose on dominated social groups who (mis)recognize this order as legitimate. I retraced Bourdieu's theorization and refinement of symbolic power through his engagement with language, Weber's sociology of religion, and his collaborative ethnographic fieldwork during the war of independence in Algeria. In IPS scholarship, this has been particularly fruitful in the study of the professionals of (in)security, diplomacy, and international law. The final section suggested new lines of inquiry emerging from Bourdieu's critical engagement with Weber, giving rise to multiple possible research agendas as broad as the transformation of democratic politics, scholarly activism, war, and the notion of "symbolic revolution." Returning to Bourdieu's early theorization of symbolic power through ethnographic fieldwork and his unfinished work on symbolic revolutions can reinvigorate the study of symbolic power and its emancipatory roots.

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CHAPTER 35

ECONOMIC POWER

MATTHEW EAGLETON-PIERCE

INTRODUCTION

Economic power is a necessary phrase for social enquiry in a world profoundly shaped by capitalism but also a problematic expression when it reinforces misleading cognitive and disciplinary dichotomies, such as positing "economics" as a "natural" counterweight to "politics" or, similarly, when "the economy" is abstracted from "society." As Rob Walker (2010: 228) alerts us, "histories of mutual implication and antagonism" cut across these sedimented binaries. For some economists who engage in gatekeeping practices, a general aura of intimidation has often been cultivated, implying to others that only a person expert in economics could be capable of explaining economic power. Such behavioral tendencies have been repeatedly criticized by many other social scientists who, through building interdisciplinary scholarship, articulate direct or indirect critiques of the most insular spaces of economics (Milonakis and Fine 2009). In these ways, therefore, the historical tension between International Political Economy (IPE) and International Political Sociology (IPS), when the economy–society dualism or separation is replicated in debates, is merely the latest iteration of a long-standing "conceptual conflict" (Samman and Seabrooke 2016: 46).

As discussed in the lead essay to this part by Guzzini and Klausen, the development of power analysis from International Relations (IR) to IPS as a field has involved a critique of the realist tradition and, in turn, a corresponding opening to wider social ontologies for understanding power. The category of economic power has been implicated in this debates, often as an illustration (or warning) of a materialistic and utilitarian sense of power. However, as Guzzini and Klausen point out, from the 1980s, IPE helped to initiate the conceptual move to relationality and intersubjectivity that was creatively explored by later IPS scholarship. Yet, in the process of the development of IPS literature, "the analysis of the economy, as in the sociology of markets, fell a bit to the wayside" (Guzzini and Klausen, this volume). While this reading is correct in the larger picture, there have been several notable interventions within and around the field of IPE which have advanced the sociological study of economic power. This chapter examines these contributions and how we can problematize the notion.

The chapter is organized into four subsequent sections. First, I briefly chart some dominant meanings and features of the disciplinary history of economic power as a term, from foundations in economic sociology to IPE and IPS uses. Second, I deploy a focused illustration on how Pierre Bourdieu, as a prominent sociologist, thought about economic power and how, in turn, we can apply his insights at the nexus between IPS and IPE problems. Third, the chapter briefly outlines new pathways for understanding economic power in IPS, in respect of both macro themes and specific topics of interest. The chapter is wrapped up with some concluding comments.

The journey of "economic power": From economic sociology to IPE and IPS

Prior to the nineteenth century, many authors and, no doubt, countless ordinary workers, appreciated how commercial society, commonly defined in reference to the European experience, was an unequal system that privileged particular social outcomes. In Adam Smith's classic discussion, for instance, he attacked the bounties, duties, and monopolies of mercantilist traders and politicians which, when conceived *in toto*, constituted the economic power of his time (Smith 1993 [1776]). But it is with Karl Marx and Max Weber where we find a more penetrating dissection of the social experience of capitalism, leading, in turn, to the creation of the field of economic sociology (for introductions, see Swedberg 2003).[1] In contrast to liberal political economists such as Smith, Marx argues that the division of labor is not a "technical" outcome, the result of brilliant individual entrepreneurs, but the configuration of class domination (Marx 1990 [1867]). From this starting point, there has been considerable debate in the Marxist canon over where to locate the bases of economic power: either within the social relations of production, the organs of the state, ideology, or some combination of all such domains (Jessop 2012). Equally, there have been reoccurring conversations over how to assess the durability of economic power, including the potential for resistance and revolution.

However, if Marx tended to underestimate the role of non-economic interests in commercial life, Weber brings to the surface the importance of studying norms and institutions that, while not centrally created in the service of capitalism, find a relationship within commodification processes. His paradigmatic example of the latter is the contribution of Protestantism to the birth of capitalism (Weber 2004 [1905]), but Weber's interest in studying what he called "economically relevant phenomena" or "economically conditioned phenomena" could be found in many areas of his scholarship (Weber 1949 [1904]: 64–65). In *Economy and Society* (Weber 1978 [1922]: 68), for instance, he makes clear that the concept of economic power (or *Verfügungsgewalt*, implying legally sanctioned powers of control and disposal) is "indispensable" for an account of economic sociology. For Weber, the concept is important for a variety of

enquiries, including the larger understanding of status and domination, as well as more precise enquires into profit-making, consumer culture, and other areas (Weber 1978 [1922]). In this sense, therefore, he marks out the sociological analysis of economic action to encompass the ongoing construction of property relations and social symbols.

When we advance to IPE in the late twentieth century, the appeal to sociology and, in particular, certain contributions of economic sociology began to emerge as a way to better understand power. The importing of sociological tools and techniques arose out of a dissatisfaction with positivist epistemologies in IPE, which tended to display, in a mirror (or envy) of neoclassical economics, an under-socialized conception of capitalism. In particular, the notion of economic power used by much of IPE during the 1980s and 1990s was rooted in a neorealist, coercive depiction of quantifiable resources, which, in turn, was often viewed as distinct from "ideas" or "society" as other variables (Krasner 1976; for a critique, see Guzzini 1993, 1998). There were some notable exceptions to this pattern, such as the sense that market relations should be "social embedded" within wider institutional structures, an analysis popularized by Karl Polanyi (2001 [1944]) and developed in different ways by the new economic sociology (Granovetter 1985). When applied to IPE, for instance, the idea of "embedded liberalism" tries to capture "the *fusion* of power with legitimate social purpose" in the making of the post-war, transatlantic bargain (Ruggie 1982: 382, emphasis added). Elsewhere, Susan Strange never treated social relations in the world economy as an afterthought and, indeed, offered the "knowledge structure" of power as a useful vehicle for explaining both the commodification and legitimation of certain forms of expertise (Strange 1994). Likewise, one can also point to the neo-Gramscian approach on hegemony as also attentive to power as not simply brute material interests but operating in a dialectical relationship with social forces (Cox 1987; Gill 1993).

Nonetheless, it took until the 2000s before a more mature "constructivist IPE" developed (for overviews, see Abdelal, Blyth, and Parsons 2010; Broome 2013; Nelson 2020). Much of this literature has been opposed to the "open economy politics" approach, now dominant in US-based scholarship, which, among its core properties, tends to deduce (or assume) rational interests from neoclassical economic theory as a way to explain economic action (Lake 2009; Rickard 2021). When it comes to how economic power, or power in general, has been conceived by constructivist IPE scholarship, we can note different uses. Through a principal focus on explaining intersubjective, ideational dynamics in the world economy, there has been a flourishing of productive research that has enhanced our appreciation for power as a social fact. From this ontological baseline, writers have examined the power of particular ideas to shape distributional outcomes and policy choices (Blyth 2002, 2013; Best 2005, 2014; Chwieroth 2010; Nelson 2017), as well as the power of identity construction and performativity (de Goede 2005; Seabrooke 2006; Langley 2008; Weaver 2008). The attention to cultural political economy has also marked an associated, but distinct, research cluster which has, in particular, reacted against a narrow sense of "culture" in

some areas of constructivist IPE, as well as more broadly (Best and Paterson 2010; Sum and Jessop 2015).

That said, some cautions and criticisms on constructivist IPE can be made. In one sense, there remains a risk that scholars drift into forms of "ideational essentialism" (Blyth 2002: 270) in which the notion of economic power, while acknowledged that it plays "a role" (in a compartmentalized or comparative analytic sense), remains submerged and underspecified. In other words, the concept is avoided by some constructivist theorists due to an anxiety about being associated with the realist tradition of power analysis. A related concern is the common treatment of ideas as "nonmaterial," which, in itself, implies a particular assumption about what matter is (often unstated). For instance, the knowledge needed for the very mapping, explaining, and justifying of capitalist processes cannot be created without a vast array of monetary assets: from funding academic programs (which produce business graduates), to countless forms of state institutional research, to advertising campaigns of consumer products, to name but three examples. In short, as discussed in the second section in reference to Bourdieu, I suggest that it would be better to interpret symbolic structures (ideas, narratives) as operating within a symbiotic relationship with material structures to the extent that it is often difficult to separate out the two dimensions when exploring social spaces (Eagleton-Pierce 2013).

If constructivist IPE has, at times, displayed a problematic relationship to the concept of economic power, how has IPS scholarship invoked the notion? Three promising areas at the nexus between IPE and IPS can be noted. First, by drawing upon post-structuralism in particular, along with other areas of critical social theory, a group of scholars has shown how to combine the analysis of finance and security politics (de Goede 2005, 2012, 2021; Boy, Burgess, and Leander 2011; Lobo-Guerrero 2012). Here, we are interested in how economic power is not only reproduced through interest groups and institutions (as classic objects of political analysis) but also inscribed into technologies, artifacts, and infrastructures where (in)security is enforced and negotiated. For example, as Marieke de Goede argues, the "weaponization" of the SWIFT banking payments network has been used in US sanctions policy, forming in the process an "overlooked site of political-economic power" (de Goede 2021: 352). Other related analysis, inspired by Foucault, has again sought to open up the category of power with a view to not treating "the economic" as an easily bracketed domain, such a notable work on terrorist financing and the links between neoliberal governmentality and the so-called War on Terror (Kiersey 2009; de Larrinaga and Doucet 2010; Lobo-Guerrero 2012; de Goede 2018).

Second, within feminist analysis in both political economy and political sociology, the gendered properties of economic power have often been a prime object of analysis, including classic discussions on the division of labor, the public–private divide, the inequities of social reproduction, and links to forms of violence against women (Enloe 1989, 2011; Steans and Tepe 2010; True 2012). As mapped out by Maria Stern (2016),

feminist political economy has often drawn upon concepts and concerns that animate IPS scholarship, such as around emotions, embodiment, materiality, and reflexivity. One way that the notion of economic power has been utilized is for understanding how capitalist ideology struggles to incorporate certain feminist ideas that could serve the interests of accumulation while, at the same time, reject other propositions that are too radical (on this general argument, see Fraser 2013). For instance, as Jacqui True has argued in reference to debates on female empowerment that followed the global financial crisis, "the role of economic power" is found in both "enabling and constraining cultural discourses of women's leadership," whereby liberal feminist icons, such as Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer of Meta Platforms (formerly Facebook), are often promoted in the media as ideal models for valorizing individualized decision-making as a solution to inequality (True 2016: 45; see also Elias 2013). In other literature, both IPE and IPS scholarship on gender analysis has utilized the everyday as a fruitful point of commonality for exploring the wider domain of politics and, in turn, criticizing the state, the market, and the household as the only ways to conceive of economic power (Elias, Rethel, and Tilley 2019).

Third, drawing upon foundational literature in economic sociology, among other sources, another prominent set of debates has surrounded the political economy of expertise and professions (Sending 2015; Harrington 2016; Kennedy 2016; Seabrooke and Henriksen 2017; Harrington and Seabrooke 2020). Here, the concept of economic power has again been reconsidered, often treated as one form of capital among others in need of analysis. For instance, in Sending's (2015) analysis of the creation of the transnational field of population governance from the 1940s, he documents the role of John D. Rockefeller Junior's wealth, arguing that such economic power was fused together with other dimensions of capital, including cultural expertise, to form a new philanthropic domain for the family. Similarly, when addressing the wider growth of professionalization in international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), Eagleton-Pierce (2018) has documented the ways in which economic power stands as an important factor for explaining advocacy trends, such as in the ability to fund major campaigns and expand operations. Yet, such capability also needs to be contextualized via reference to how NGO players produce the "scientific capital" to speak with authority and stake a claim on the world economy. This attention to the interplay between different "species of power" obviously invokes a Bourdieusian sense, a more extended commentary of which we can now turn to.

Illustration: Putting Pierre Bourdieu to Work in the Study of Political Economy

Bourdieu is a prominent theorist who has been deployed by a range of IPS scholars to the extent that there is broad acceptance that he has "made it" in the larger field of IR

(Williams 2007; Mérand 2008; Pouliot 2010; Bigo 2011; Adler-Nissen 2012). However, as noted by Guzzini and Klausen in their lead essay to this part, when compared to the examination of the politics of security and other standard IR issue areas, the application of Bourdieu to IPE has been comparatively limited (for exceptions, see Hattori (2001), Leander (2002), and Eagleton-Pierce (2013)). Such deficiency is unfortunate, given that Bourdieu worked within the legacy of Marx and, among similar objectives to IPE scholarship, explored the profound effects of capitalism, including the centrality of social struggle in class-based accounts of inequality, how the economy shapes experiences of modernity, and the role of dominant ideologies (or "doxa," as he sometimes termed it). The thread of materialist analysis weaves throughout Bourdieu's *oeuvre*, including his evaluation of Western conceptions of work in colonial Algeria (Bourdieu and Sayad 2020 [1964]), the subtle analysis of consumerism found in *Distinction* (Bourdieu 2010 [1984]), and the activist intellectual critiques on neoliberalism (Bourdieu 1998, 2003), as well as the attention to the French housing market (Bourdieu 2005b). There are debates on how far Bourdieu should be read as a Marxist—ranging from some who charge that he does not seriously engage with Marx (Robbins 2006) to others who suggest he should be aligned with cultural Marxists, such as Edward Palmer Thompson or Raymond Williams (Fowler 2011)—but there is no question that Bourdieu treats materialist analysis as an important foundation for social enquiry.

Within his pluralization of power—social capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital among the key extensions—there are issues regarding how Bourdieu thinks about the concept of economic capital. In "The Forms of Capital," a widely read essay, he refers to economic capital as material assets that are "immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights" (Bourdieu 1986: 242). He suggests, at one point, that economic capital lies "at the root of all the other forms of capital" (Bourdieu 1986: 252). In this move, Bourdieu reacts against both naïve economistic analysis, which fails to unmask the complexity of historical materialism, and the particular "exchange rates" between economic capital and the other capitals, as well as idealistic arguments that pay little attention to capitalism. However, Bourdieu's notion of economic capital remains puzzling and, at times, frustrating. Beyond this basic definition, he does not offer any further elaboration of the concept, often objectifying it as "owned" by the field of economics, for which it is the duty of sociology to critique the "anthropological monster" that is *homo economicus* (Bourdieu 2005a: 83; Desai 2013; Neveu 2018). There is some merit to this criticism that Bourdieu operates with an unsophisticated sense of economic capital, particularly when compared to other areas of his theorization. At the same time, I would suggest that it is best to empirically recast the notion with two objectives in mind: (i) the building of extra conceptual infrastructure to enhance the core focus on materialism and (ii) a closer examination of the relations between economic capital and other capitals. In this

way, we align with Bourdieu's point that by demystifying the other capitals, we can furnish a better appreciation for the movement and reproduction of economic power.

With these issues in mind, it could be helpful to illuminate how I have used Bourdieu in reference to a study on developing countries within the political economy of global trade diplomacy (Eagleton-Pierce 2013). Three points are relevant. First, prior to applying Bourdieu's theorizing on symbolic power, the most important task was to adequately comprehend the main material constraints and inequities that would, in turn, give rise to particular political struggles at the World Trade Organization (WTO). This necessitated absorbing relevant literature informed by economics and law, since such disciplines remain the key gateways for knowledge production on global trade, both in policymaking *milieu* and much of academia. Thus, in one case, study on the international cotton trade, "economic capital" could only make sense and provide a richer analytical utility when I debated contextual evidence, including the macro structure of such trade (market share of key countries); types of state-led intervention (subsidies, taxation); the role of lobby groups and electoral politics; the recent movement of the main price for cotton; and geographically uneven distributional effects on farmers (income estimates, impacts on livelihoods). When I advanced to discuss the evolution of WTO talks on cotton, the bargaining positions taken by relevant countries, at least in terms of opening postures, needed this awareness of economic capital. In other words, the notion of economic capital is not a blunt theoretical instrument but should be treated as an open concept that acquires meaning through the labor of relevant empirical documentation.

Second, following this conventional economic analysis, I was in a better position to sociologize the political economy of trade through Bourdieu's category of symbolic power. As I have argued, symbolic power should be understood as a conceptual framework which, when applied effectively, helps to decipher the politics of "linguistic markets" operating in particular social spaces, that is understanding language as, at one and the same time, a system of communication, domination, and, potentially, resistance (Bourdieu 1977, 1979, 1991). Operating like a form of "extra credit" on top of existing forms of power, symbolic power is part of a "ceaseless, often arduous, social struggle for recognition; it is a labour of creating and denigrating the meanings of the commercial world" (Eagleton-Pierce 2013: 158). For instance, classifications of trade problems—from the macro distinctions between developed versus developing countries to particular rules within legal agreements—can stabilize certain commercial interests over others, shaping not only what volumes of economic capital can be generated and which issues can be discussed but also the very making of political groups (Bourdieu 1 987; Wacquant 2013). In the WTO, this can be seen in the self-designated naming of "developing country," which provides access to particular economic benefits, such as around special and differential treatment rules.[2] In other contexts, however, the symbolic power of trade law—from crystallized rules to more subtle sleights of hand used by skillful negotiators—can serve to "rhetorically entrap" (Schimmelfennig 2003:

199) some countries, leading to damaging material outcomes (see e.g. the impact of high intellectual property rents in respect of access to essential medicines).

This brings me to a third remark—partly theoretical, partly methodological—on the wider relations between symbolic capital and other classic dimensions of power. Bourdieu's framework is not some *deus ex machina* capable of exposing every aspect of power. For example, his ideas are less useful for explaining violent and coercive behavior found in capitalist history, such as slavery and indentured labor, dangerous workplaces, or precarious employment contracts. In addition, as I examined in my account on the WTO, the properties of the linguistic market on trade policy are shaped by a panoply of historical institutional structures. Such temporal dynamics are implicit in Bourdieu's theorizing, but arguably become more significant when analyzing bureaucracies and other complex rule-making regimes common in IPE scholarship. Thus, depending upon the empirical context, I suggest that some forms of symbolic capital can rise in profitability following a long period of institutionalization; that is, "profit" is understood here as a form of enhanced legitimacy or a settled "common sense" about a particular social arrangement. As I suggest, " 'although symbolic power finds its high point in law'—the public codification and formalization of 'particular' interests into the 'universal'—one needs to trace how such moments are often the product of considerable prior deliberation. To concentrate only on major gatherings that are bathed in the glare of media cameras would ignore how the legitimacy of, say, a ministerial declaration can only be properly understood in the historical context of what it excludes as much as what it seals under the name of 'consensus' " (Eagleton-Pierce 2013: 158).

Inspired by Loïc Wacquant's (2018) observations, there are some practical warnings on how to deploy Bourdieu worth noting, relevant for the study of political economy, but also more broadly in the analysis of IPS. One issue centers on the need to avoid fetishizing Bourdieu's ideas. Frequently misread as a Ivory Tower theorist, the author of *Distinction* (1984) was in reality "a dogged detractor of 'conspicuous theorizing' " (Wacquant 2018: 649), one who saw the proof of theoretical construction in its empirical eating, of which the latter always preceded the former. Another related risk is a rhetorical trap in which authors speak in the vocabulary of "Bourdieuse," yet the concepts, such as the different species of capital or other notions (field, habitus, doxa, etc.), do not perform any analytical heavy lifting in the text. Instead, the elaboration of such constructions appears to be largely performed for presentational reasons, to obtain recognition in the status games of academia, rather than seriously questioning whether they are actually needed in the first place. Finally, within shorter articles or, indeed, book projects, there is a valuable pay-off from selecting, unpicking, and grasping only one or two of Bourdieu's concepts before undertaking the application process to the empirical material. This economizing of Bourdieu tends to lead to richer intellectual outcomes, rather than overloading the argument when too many conceptual balls are juggled at the same time (Wacquant 2018).

New directions for studying economic power in IPS

What new pathways for sociologizing economic power could be taken? One problem remains the disciplinary gaps, antagonisms, and noncommunication between IPE and IPS. As discussed in the first section, the situation is improving and there are more pronounced efforts to nurture better dialogue and scholarship between IPE and IPS research networks. Nonetheless, as one recent journal forum section suggested, a "mutual neglect" between the two research communities is still observable. To concur with these authors, "there is no *a priori* reason to separate the sociocultural, the political and the economic when we aim at making sense of the world in any meaningful way" (Graz, Kessler, and Kunz 2019: 587). One can identify considerable common ground between the macro objectives of much of IPE and IPS research, such as in respect to theoretical terminology (power, hierarchy, discourse, practices, territory, etc.), as well as overlapping empirical concerns (relations between state and society, socio-political inequalities, developmental politics, colonial legacies, the role of technologies, etc.). Equally, due to the interdisciplinary instincts of researchers in both fields, there is often an intellectual openness and eclecticism in both IPE and IPS enquiries. This should not detract from the hard labor of making interdisciplinary scholarship productive: due to the astonishing volume of scholarship produced each year, the mastering of a single discipline is an acute challenge, never mind two or three. Nonetheless, further practical initiatives could be encouraged, such as within key journals, the main sections under the International Studies Association (IPE and International Political Society), or other special workshops and conferences.

When addressing the sociological analysis of international economic power, and following Bourdieu in particular, there are also analytical challenges that require further thinking. One concern is the "exchange rate" problem. If we accept a pluralization of power into different sub-concepts, of which "the economic" is a particular domain, to be positioned along others ("the political," "the cultural," etc.), then how do such conceptualizations relate to each other? When is one category more intellectually valuable than another? How is economic power "cashed into" other forms of power? In turn, how do other forms of power enable a revaluation or devaluation of economic power? Another concern could be called the "overload" problem and, indeed, may directly stem from the difficulty of handling multiple notions of power. To echo the lead essay in this part by Guzzini and Klausen, there is a risk here that power analysis leads to an analytical "dead end" whereby the concept is "taken too seriously" as it is widened and called upon to explain too many phenomenon. In other words, there can be an excessive scholarly burden placed on the concept. In reference to economic power, we could, indeed, consider other notions that, depending upon the research strategy at hand, may be more precise or sharper for explaining distributional consequences, such as "materialism," "commercialization," "commodification," or "capitalist processes."

Perhaps the phrase "economic power," operating at a higher level of abstraction, may be best utilized for framing and concluding discussions, while the process of mid-range analysis and empirical dissection involves alternative conceptual tools.

What empirical areas are underexplored in relation to the concerns expressed in this chapter? Among possibilities, three areas can be highlighted. First, in IPS, IPE, as well as wider IR scholarship, there still remains poor coverage of environmental politics relative to its existential importance. A cluster of authors are alert to the productive nexus between IPE and sociological thinking (Katz-Rosene and Paterson 2018; Best and Paterson 2010), as well as related scholarship in the field of environmental sociology (Lockie 2015), but more thinking and dialogues would be hugely beneficial. Second, there is some emerging scholarship around the politics of race and decolonization that is inspired by both political economy and sociology, including the ties and interdependencies between racial capitalism, Islamophobia, and austerity politics (Ali and Whitham 2021); as well, how measures of mass incarceration and police brutality can be understood in the context of global racial ordering (Axster et al. 2021). Again, these commendable interventions serve as inspiration for how the larger analysis of economic power can be revived and incorporated into new fruitful enquiries. Third, another topic of interest would involve the complex relationship between consumerism, structural commodification trends, and social activist politics, as neatly explored in Jemima Repo's (2020) examination of the resurgence of a "feminist commodity activism." In respect to all these recent outputs, the forms of economic power addressed are explored through attending to objective and subjective properties, that is seeing economic power via material properties, social uses, and cognitive constructions.

Conclusion

This chapter has mapped and dissected how the notion of economic power has been explored in debates associated with IPS. We began by first problematizing the larger category of power, as discussed in the Guzzini and Klausen lead essay, before offering a brief tour on the uses of economic power, connecting classic economic sociology foundations to more recent scholarship in IPE and IPS. The argument was given extra focus with some pointers on how Bourdieu, as a key sociologist, can be effectively deployed to better unravel the properties of economic power within particular social *milieus*. Overall, the chapter has been animated by a certain skepticism on the intellectual value of the phrase economic power, chiefly because the term can invoke and reconsolidate, sometimes via an unthinking reflex, unhelpful mental and intellectual dichotomies (such as economics versus politics, economy versus society, etc.). Yet, at the same time, the expression can still be a useful shorthand or opening frame for exploring the movement and regeneration of capitalist processes, particularly uneven distributional effects. In the context of the current phase of IPS scholarship, we can note

that the concept of economic power, or the study of capitalism with which (for some) the term is synonymous, has thankfully become more multifaceted and intricate. As noted in the third section above, I suggest that there is considerable scope for deepening the nexus between IPS and IPE as a vehicle for enhancing our appreciation for economic power within the social universe of power. As a thinking tool, the notion of economic power calls attention to the sources and impacts of control in the world economy, yet as the literature debated in this chapter helps to reveal, sociological insights and methods can enlighten our understanding for how to grasp such complex processes of change.

Notes

1. The term "economic sociology" was coined by William Stanley Jevons in 1879. Elsewhere, other key figures of classical economic sociology include Émile Durkheim and Georg Simmel, along with Joseph Schumpeter and Talcott Parsons. For an overview, see Smelser and Swedberg (2005).
2. Special and differential treatment (SDT) in international trade has been commonly founded upon the recognition that exemptions or extra conditions to the trade liberalization model need to be sought, not because the model is fundamentally flawed but because developing and least developed countries need assistance, either narrowly in terms of complying with trade rules or more broadly in regard to their development or integration with the system.

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CHAPTER 36

CORPOREAL POWER

SABRINA AXSTER AND IDA DANEWID

> What of the body that is always under the seduction of death, white racist violence, diseases, perverse hetero-sexism, pervasive addictions and unemployment? I am talking about the body that is marked by racial, sexual and class configurations. It is this body, this fleshy materiality that seems to disappear from much of the current proliferation of discourses on the body.
>
> Bibi Bakare-Yusuf (1999: 313)

INTRODUCTION

While the wider humanities underwent a "corporeal turn" in the 1990s, International Political Sociology (IPS) has only recently begun to take an interest in questions around the body, embodiment, and corporeality. "Where is the body in international relations?," David Campbell and Michael Dillon asked as early as 1993 (Campbell and Dillon 1993: 162). Three decades later, a variety of feminist, post-structuralist, and critical theorists have developed various answers to this question. Pushing beyond the traditional focus of International Relations (IR) on states and the state system, they center the body as a site of the international. The concept of corporeal power is here invoked not to describe a separate category of power such as symbolic power (Hoffmann, this volume), military power (Spindel, this volume), or economic power (Eagleton-Price, this volume) but to indicate a particular orientation to the study of power, violence, and embodiment. In particular, where more conventional IR scholarship conceives of power as something that is done *to* bodies, scholars of corporeal power encourage us to consider the ways in which power is also *productive* of them (for an overview, see Guzzini and Klausen, this volume). As Lauren Wilcox (2014: 23) puts it, "rather than working on bodies as sovereign power, power works through bodies to shape subjects."

In this chapter, we seek to push this corporeal turn further by drawing on black and decolonial (feminist) approaches. We argue that, although IPS scholarship has done much to highlight the embodied character of global violence and (in)security, there has often been a reluctance to take seriously questions of race, empire, and (settler) colonialism. The result has been an abstract and exceptionalized understanding of corporeal power that ignores its violent origins and ongoing centrality to racial capitalism. In place of established IPS approaches, we turn to black and decolonial (feminist) theories that exist outside of the (sub-)discipline. By drawing on the work of

Sylvia Wynter, Hortense Spillers, and Françoise Vergès, we reconceptualize corporeal power as a structure of difference and hierarchy of humanness that is integral to racial and colonial capitalism; a power that represses at the same time as it produces corporeal difference; a power that is therefore both racialized and racializing. Corporeal power thus understood is not confined to a state of exception outside of liberal normality but rather names the racial and colonial power to extract, exhaust, and abandon "the poor, the racially othered, the disabled, the surplus of the global body politic" (Raza Kolb 2020: xii).

The chapter proceeds in five parts. We first discuss the influential biopolitical scholarship of Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and Judith Butler, which has inspired scholarship on corporeal power in IR and IPS. We argue that, due to colonial amnesia and methodological whiteness,[1] these approaches have overwhelmingly associated corporeal power with a universal and abstract state of exception. To challenge this framework, we turn to the black and decolonial works of Sylvia Wynter, Hortense Spillers, and Françoise Vergès. This allows us to develop an alternative conceptualization of corporeal power anchored in a critical analysis of empire, enslavement, and racial capitalism. In the final three sections, we demonstrate how this sheds new light on three thematic areas of interest to IPS scholars: detention and incarceration, biocapital and the trade of biological products, and the COVID-19 pandemic. What emerges, through these examples, is an understanding of corporeal power's long (settler) colonial history as well as its ongoing centrality to racial capitalism's drive to dominate and extract in the world today. As Saidiya Hartman puts it (1997: 75), "the subterranean history of death and discontinuity informs everyday practice in myriad ways". As we shall see, studying corporeal power necessitates an engagement with this subterranean history of the necropolitical everyday.

Critical IR, the body, and corporeal power

Long sidelined in the field of IR, questions of the body and corporeal power have gained prominence in critical IR scholarship. These modes of analysis draw from Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and Judith Butler's work on biopolitics. Foucault first introduced the concept of biopolitics to mark the turn toward the power "to make life and to let die" (Foucault 1978, 1997). Biopolitics, to Foucault, is the moment when "the biological" came under the control of the state: "for the first time in history, no doubt, the biological was reflected in the political; the fact of living was no longer an inaccessible substrate that only emerged from time to time … part of it passed into knowledge's field of control and power's sphere of intervention" (Foucault 1978: 142–143). Hence, biopolitics offers a different path of analysis away from the individual body and micro-techniques—as evident in Foucault's other work on governmentality and disciplinary power—toward a focus on the population as a whole or "man-as-

species." This led to the introduction of new techniques of power that sought to regularize populations by producing statistics to observe birth rates, health, migration, housing, and demographics, among others. As such, biopolitics demarcates a shift away from the previous form of power—namely sovereign power, which was the power "to make die and to let live" (i.e. the right of life and death); a shift that, according to Foucault, occurred as part of the onset of modernity. Corporeal power read through biopolitics thus exists to render life visible to the sovereign in order to sustain, measure, and organize it.

In contrast to Foucault, Giorgio Agamben's understanding of biopolitics and corporeal power centers around the construction and evolution of Western politics (Agamben 1999). Corporeal power produces what he calls bare life—life in the natural state outside of political life—by subjecting the body of those excluded—the *homo sacer*—to extreme forms of violence that would not be permissible under regular sovereign politics. To him, *homo sacer* or bare life demarcates the boundary between the state of exception and sovereignty. The defining moment of biopolitics is when this bare life enters political life. For Agamben, bare life therefore always exists outside and inside the law. Its exclusion through corporeal power makes the development of political norms possible as they constantly have to redefine themselves against it. In his understanding of biopolitics, Agamben thus departs from Foucault in two central ways. First, he argues that Western politics has been biopolitics since its inception in ancient Greece, thereby directly challenging Foucault's emphasis on the advent of modernity. Second, Agamben foregrounds the violence that is endemic to biopolitics.[2]

Alongside Foucault and Agamben, Judith Butler's work on performativity, vulnerability, and normative violence provides an alternative avenue into thinking about biopolitics and corporeal power. The body, for Butler, is neither natural nor pre-political but a result of violent exclusions: "Normative schemes of intelligibility establish what will and will not be human, what will be a livable life, what will be a grievable death" (Butler 2004: 146). Humanity is thus "implicitly divided between those for whom we feel urgent and unreasoned concern, and those whose lives and deaths simply do not touch us, or do not appear as lives at all" (Butler 2009: 50).[3] As a form of corporeal power, this type of normative violence typically precedes and, indeed, makes possible other types of physical violence that injure and kill.

Inspired by these thinkers, corporeality has prominently been taken up by critical IR and IPS scholarship on war, security, and violence. Some have drawn on Foucault to examine how technologies of war have come to infiltrate everyday life, thus eroding the distinction between military, civil, and commercial spaces (Amoore 2009; Epstein 2007). Others have built on Butler to discuss the affective role of bodies in war (Åhäll 2019; Baker 2020; Purnell 2021) or the bodily experience of war (McSorley 2014; Sylvester 2012). Scholars inspired by Agamben, meanwhile, have probed how sovereign power operates by reducing vulnerable populations to "bare life" in the state of

exception (Edkins and Pin-Fat 2005). These biopolitical bodies of thought have also provided a path to understanding how corporeal power serves to demarcate the scope of the political community. For example, feminist scholars inspired by Butler have theorized corporeal power as a normative framework that shapes dominant understandings of who can have violence inflicted upon them and who is seen as a legitimate subject of suffering (Auchter 2016; Gregory 2016; Wilcox 2015). Drawing on Foucault, others have explored how corporeal power operates to divide, categorize, and track the bodies of perceived migrants, criminals, terrorists, and other subject categories deemed "risky" to be able to differentiate between disqualified and qualified members of the body politic and remove those viewed as threatening (Amoore 2006; Epstein 2021; Muller 2004).

While these approaches have generated important insights into the relationship between the body, embodiment, and power, they have nonetheless been prone to rely on an analysis that disavows racial and colonial histories as well as their many afterlives. As Alexander Weheliye (2014: 8) argues, "bare life and biopolitics discourse largely occludes race as a critical category of analysis." While racism is central to the operations of biopolitics for both Foucault, Butler, and Agamben, it is a racism that is divorced from the long history of European colonialism, enslavement, and genocide (Mbembe 2003). Agamben, for example, conceptualizes the Nazi Holocaust as the nomos of the earth without further analyzing its deeper roots in colonial conquest, including the "Indian removal" of the 1830s, the Second South African War (1899–1902), and the genocide of Herero and Namaqua populations in German Southwest Africa. Foucault, similarly, offers a genealogy of European state racism that is "confined to a version of nineteenth-century Europe oddly unscathed by colonialism and ethnic racism" (Weheliye 2014: 61). This is despite the fact that the political philosophy and struggles of the Black Panther Party played a foundational role in framing Foucault's work on biopolitics. As Thomas Brady Heiner (2007) has shown, Foucault only began to explicitly theorize power relations and techniques of domination after he witnessed the Black Power movement and "the racially fashioned class warfare" in the United States. These are intellectual debts that Foucault never acknowledged. Butler, meanwhile, provides a generalized theory of corporeal vulnerability without anchoring this in a more explicit theorization of the racial and colonial violence that historically has produced some populations as more vulnerable than others.[4]

The result of this colonial disavowal—evident in Foucault and Agamben, as well as in Butler—is a theory of racism as a *consequence* of biopolitics, rather than its *foundation*; indeed, racism is "more an unfortunate cultural artifact than a global system of expropriation fundamental to the conditions of possibility for the liberal way of war and biopolitical security assemblages" (Howell and Richter-Montpetit 2018: 3). Corporeal power here emerges as "an abstract and almost metaphysical, disembodied conception of power" (Federici, in Colantuono and Austin 2021), divorced from the concrete histories of empire, enslavement, and (settler) colonial dispossession from

which it emerged. In Foucault, Agamben, and Butler, race is not simply forgotten. Rather, it is actively erased to produce a generalized and abstract theory of corporeal power.

Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit (2018) lay bare how this colonial amnesia shapes IR scholarship. They show that these strands of scholarship typically assume that *everyone* could be considered dangerous and, hence, subjected to the punitive power of the state. This disregards how state practices of violence largely play out on the bodies of racialized populations. It also ignores the central question of security *for whom*. Pushing beyond a generalized understanding of security allows us to see that those who are considered the worthy objects of security are those who are constructed as belonging to the political community (read white, middle class, cis-gendered) while marginalized and racialized populations are considered security threats (Guerra 2021). Rather than framing racist state violence as an exception to the norms of liberal rule, corporeal power must instead be understood through the lens of racism as foundational and endemic to the maintenance of liberal order and racial capitalism (Agathangelou 2011; Agathangelou and Ahmed 2020; Howell 2018; Howell and Richter-Montpetit 2018, 2019).

In sum, while the biopolitical approaches inspired by Foucault, Agamben, and Butler have furthered our understanding of the interplay between power, violence, and the body, they have often operated within the confines of colonial amnesia and methodological whiteness. "How," asks Weheliye (2014), would the theory of biopolitics differ if Foucault and Agamben "took the Middle Passage as their point of departure rather than remaining entrapped within the historiographical cum philosophical precincts of fortress Europe?" To explore possible answers, we build on insights developed by a vibrant literature outside of IR and IPS, straddling black studies, post and decolonial theory, political geography, and sociology. Unlike biopolitics-inspired approaches, this diverse body of work has theorized modernity as a violent system of racialized extraction, exploitation, and expropriation. We now turn to three of its central thinkers to see how this literature sheds new light on the concept of corporeal power.

Enfleshment, exhaustion, extraction

The variegated scholarship by Sylvia Wynter, Hortense Spillers, and Françoise Vergès has, until recently, been markedly absent from IPS. Hailing from Jamaica, the United States, and Réunion, respectively, they nonetheless provide incisive analyses of the body and its relationship to structures of race, gender, colonialism, and capitalism. They each, in their own way, examine the creation of death worlds—not as an exceptional event, or as a phenomenon confined to a dark historical past, but as a structural feature of modernity/coloniality. Corporeal power, when read through their scholarship, names

the power to turn bodies into exhaustible and extractable flesh: a process which, we argue, is central to facilitating and entrenching violent systems of extraction, expropriation, and exploitation. Consequently, and in stark contrast to the biopolitical approaches discussed above, corporeal power here emerges as a constitutive element of the racial capitalist world order.

Sylvia Wynter (born 1928) is an essayist, dramatist, cultural critic, and philosopher known for her writings on the colonial history of European conceptions of humanity. Her work on the body centers around the question of sociogeny, a concept she borrows from Frantz Fanon. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon famously argues that the human body has a biological as well as symbolic, social existence. Indeed, "the alienation of the black man is not an individual question … Society, unlike biochemical processes, does not escape human influence. Man is what brings society into being" (Fanon 1986: 13). The body, Fanon suggests, cannot be understood in purely biological terms, outside of culture, language, and discourse: indeed, there is no biology that is not at once sociology. The concept of sociogeny thus names the process whereby certain corporeal features are ascribed to specific populations *as if* those features were biological. Wynter builds on these ideas and traces their inauguration to the colonization of the New World. The birth of the modern/colonial world is, for her, at once the birth of Western bourgeois Man as well as of its constitutive outside: namely, the racialized body. As she explains (in Scott 2000: 186),

> the West was to be able to reinvent its true Christian self as that of Man only because, at the same time, Western discourses, such as that of anthropology, were also inventing the untrue Other of the Christian self, as that of Man's human Others. So indios/indias/Indians in the encomienda neo-serf labour institution and negros/negas/Negroes in the plantation slave labour institution were now to be classified, in Western terms, as the human Others to the West's self-conception in the terms of Man as a rational being and political subject.

Unlike theories of biopolitics, Wynter's work thus reveals how the concept of the human is an *inherently* racializing technology: the elevation of bourgeois Man is structurally dependent on the degradation of others, including the enslaved, the colonized, and the poor (Wynter 2004). As Zakiyyah Iman Jackson has shown, this degradation is often formed through a process of animalization and bestialization. Enlightenment philosophers, phrenologists, and physiognomists frequently compared Africans to apes, chimpanzees, and orangutans.[5] Rather than just resembling animals, black subjects were reduced to "animals occupying the human form" (Jackson 2020: 22). As Jackson (2020: 1) points out, the process of "imagining black people as an empty vessel, a nonbeing, a nothing, an ontological zero" thus cuts straight through the black(ened) body, transformed into beast and monster. The exhibition of Saartje Baartman, the so-called "Venus Hottentot," famously exemplifies this logic. Enslaved in 1810, Baartman was exhibited for pornographic entertainment in both London and Paris, "much like a wild beast in a cage" (Ponzanesi 2005: 170). A cast of her body, alongside her conserved brain and genitalia, remained on display in Musée de l'homme in Paris until 1974.

As the example of Baartman makes clear, gender and sexuality were central mechanisms through which black people were constructed as nonhuman animals. In her groundbreaking essay from 1987, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," literary critic and black feminist Hortense Spillers (born 1942) explores this process in depth. She argues that the Middle Passage reduced captive Africans from bodies to mere flesh (Spillers 1987: 67):

> I would make a distinction in this case between "body" and "flesh" and impose that distinction as the central one between captive and liberated subject-positions. In that sense, before the "body" there is "the flesh" that zero degree of social conceptualization.

The disavowal of gender was central to the process whereby black subjects were transformed into fungible and accumulable flesh. As Spillers explains, gender must thus be seen as more than a line drawn between the feminine and the masculine, the private and the public, and the reproductive and productive spheres. Rather, gender was—and, indeed, remains—a technology of race-making that distinguishes the white human from ungendered black monstrosity: that is, from property. The process of ungendering "made Black being into a usable, shippable, transactable, disownable, atomizable, brandable, breedable, and inheritable item, a being severed from kinship …genealogy, and a proper name" (Broeck 2018: 27), that is into a "thing" or commodity caught in the "vestibularity" of culture, rather than a living and breathing person. Flesh should therefore not be seen as a biological occurrence but as something that is created through "the calculated work of iron, whips, chains, knives, the canine patrol, the bullet" (Spillers 1987: 67). As Spillers makes clear, this process ultimately laid the foundations for the plantation economies: after all, "The violent subjection of the slaves was a way of transforming their bodies into an entity that could produce and reproduce the property necessary for accumulating wealth … The slavers did not intend the slaves to die; they were concerned to ensure the survival of the black body—albeit in a demoralized form" (Bakare-Yusuf 1999: 318), that is as *flesh*.

Where Wynter's work re-reads modernity as a colonial project centered around the dominance of white bourgeois Man, and Spillers theorizes the creation of ungendered flesh as the foundation of the modern world, Françoise Vergès (born 1952) ties these racial-colonial histories to a structural analysis of capital accumulation *in the present*. A writer, curator, and activist, her work explores the contemporary production of racialized, usable, and disposable bodies. Building on black and decolonial Marxist approaches, she understands capitalism as a racialized system of extraction, exploitation, and expropriation; that is, as an economy of waste and destruction that is "the consequence of the historical logic of extractivism that built primitive accumulation and capital—extracting labor from racialized bodies" (Vergès 2017, 2019). Crucially, this system makes "the world safe and clean for a few" through the exhaustion, exploitation, and wearing out "of many" (Vergès 2021a: vi). This includes the thousands of migrant and minority women who everyday clean the gyms, offices, and wealthy

homes of the global city (be they in "Maputo, Rio de Janeiro, Riyadh, Kuala Lumpur, Rabat, or Paris"), as well as the "men and children who clean mountains of household and toxic waste—garbage collectors, Dalits who empty the sewers, Africans who dismantle technology waste in Accra, the workers who unload ships in Bangladesh, etc" (Vergès 2021a: 77). Underpaid, super-exploited, and frequently viewed as "unskilled," these racialized and feminized workers keep capitalism running by removing its waste products. This, of course, is nothing new: from yesteryear's plantation to today's global metropoles, the enslaved, colonized, and racial poor have historically performed this (re)productive labor. It is this racialized economy of exhaustion, fatigue, and premature death that maintains the wealthy, healthy, and clean lifestyles of the neoliberal bourgeoisie.

The scholarship of Wynter, Spillers, and Vergès leaves us with an understanding of corporeal power as a central feature of the racial capitalist world order. In contrast to biopolitical approaches, this black and decolonial framework reveals corporeal power as a *sine qua non* of the past and present: not as the exception. Together, these thinkers push us to understand corporeal power as a material force that is at once repressive and productive: as something that polices and pacifies at the same time that it produces corporeal difference. That difference—structured according to logics of race, gender, nationality, and sex—in turn paves the way for continued extraction, exploitation, and expropriation. To unpack these ideas, we now turn to consider the work of corporeal power in three separate contexts: in debates about (i) incarceration and detention, (ii) social reproduction and biocapitalism, and (iii) the global COVID-19 pandemic and global health. As we shall see, to study corporeal power through a black and decolonial lens is to pay close attention to the ways in which the exhaustion and exploitation of the racial (un)gendered poor upholds the capitalist world.

Prisons, camps, and the incarcerated body

Incarceration is often seen as *the* paradigmatic practice of corporeal power in the modern world. Racialized migrants and refugees are detained in camps and centers scattered across the globe, black Americans are incarcerated at almost five times the rate of white Americans, and "suspected" terrorists are locked away in black sites. An analysis inspired by Wynter, Spillers, and Vergès helps us see the deep colonial roots of these practices and their centrality to the racial capitalist world order, thereby revealing the connections between these "domestic" and "international" forms of repressive state violence. In contrast, scholarship on incarceration in IR and IPS, which is predominantly inspired by biopolitics, largely ignores these dimensions. In drawing on the work of Giorgio Agamben, who views the camp as "the pure, absolute, and impassable biopolitical space (insofar as it is founded solely on the state of exception)" (Agamben 1995: 123), they promulgate a reading of the camp as fundamentally different

from the prison. Agamben himself argues that the camp emerged out of martial rather than criminal law (Agamben 1995: 20). One central claim thus drives IR and IPS analysis of the camp, namely that it exists in the space of exception.

Viewed through a black and decolonial Marxist lens, we can instead see the continuity—rather than exceptionality—of incarceration from the prison to the camp. As Alison Howell has shown, this artificial division between the exceptional and the normal has partly been kept in place by the academic separation of the domestic and the international (Howell 2018). Viewing the domestic as distinct from the international gave rise to the biopolitics-inspired assumption that liberal states are being "militarized" as weaponry and military strategies deployed in overseas wars are imported by domestic police. This overlooks that "normal" domestic politics is not suddenly overtaken by the exceptional. Indeed, the domestic already existed in a context of martial law. It also relegates the prison to the study of the domestic so that it receives little to no attention in IR, while the camp exists in the international sphere without reference to its colonial origins. This colonial amnesia evident in exceptionalist theories of biopolitics further allows for the argument that the production of bare life in the camp occurs without a direct reference to race and racism. Agamben in fact suggests that the camp produces the inhuman: camps "are not merely the place of death and extermination; they are also, and above all, the site of the production of the Muselman, the final biopolitical substance to be isolated in the biological continuum. Beyond the Muselman lies only the gas chamber" (Agamben 1999: 85). Consequently, in IPS scholarship on the camp, there has been little analysis of "who is detained in camps, nor why?" (Whitley 2017: 7). Thinking with Wynter, it is not the camp that produces the nonhuman. Rather, it is the camp that relies on prior racialized conceptions of who is considered to be human. Such deracialized modes of analysis are part of a larger lacuna in the field (Shilliam 2020) and, in the context of biopolitics-inspired theories of the camp, are largely facilitated by a lack of engagement with colonialism, the plantation, and enslavement (Mbembe 2003).

Thinking with black and decolonial theories allows us to push beyond the confines of colonial amnesia and methodological nationalism. It provides us with an ability to illustrate how different forms of incarceration exist in, and are shaped by, the international and the domestic in an overall global system of empire and racial capitalism. Kelly Lytle Hernandez's (2017) history of human caging in Los Angeles brilliantly illuminates this point. Hernandez helps us see how imprisonment emerged as a central tool in facilitating settler colonialism's need for cheap and unfree labor, its land-grabbing through genocide and elimination, and its quest to create a heteronormative population. Similarly, Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007) famously places the growth of the prison complex in California within the context of multiple crises of racial capitalism on a global scale—crises of surplus financial capital, land, labor, and state capacity—which she ties directly to California's reliance on military and war industries. In short, the prison must be read through the international (Davis and Dent 20

01). Examining histories of empire in turn enables rejuvenated analyses of the camp; for example, it allows us to read torture sites like Abu Ghraib through colonial practices and desires (Richter-Montpetit 2007). Ultimately, in pushing beyond the camp as the space of exception par excellence, we can place it within the larger death-making capacity of capitalism that functions through the control of the racialized body (M. I. As ma 2020):

> From its beginning to its current senile form, capitalism has presided over a massive graveyard. The slavery and genocide that marked its bloody emergence, the workhouses filled with bodies labouring to death and streets glutted with the starving poor, these have persisted through the present, combining with exterminatory wars and environmental devastation.

(Bio)Capital and the reproductive body

Beyond this focus on prison sites and the death-making power of the carceral state, the concept of corporeal power has recently surfaced in discussions about the violent production of life. Under the framework of "biocapital" and "biocapitalism," scholars have analyzed what they describe as a new epoch characterized by the trade of biological products such as sperm, blood, stem cells, organs, and—indeed—even babies (Rajan 2006; Rose 2007; for recent examples, see Sainato 2022; Veselka 2022). As Stefan Helmreich (2008: 463) explains, "in the age of genomics, stem cell research, and reproductive technology" life has "become enmeshed in market dynamics." Many scholars have turned to Foucault's work on biopolitics to make sense of these developments. Indeed, if biopolitics brought "life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations" (Foucault 1978: 143), then biocapital has given life a new, molecular dimension. Put differently, where biopolitics previously concerned itself with the management of risk at the level of population, biotechnology has broadened this focus to also include the management of risk *within* the individual body.

In contrast, once we center an analysis of corporeal power—inspired by the black and decolonial feminist approaches discussed above—it becomes apparent that biocapital, like biotechnology, is less novel than these approaches suggest. As Spillers reminds us, the commodification of the black body was central to New World slavery (see also Morgan 2004; Roberts 1997). In particular, slave owners conscripted black women's bodies for their own financial gain; they " 'coupled' men and women, named them husband and wife, and foresaw their own future in the bellies of enslaved workers" (Morgan 2004: 105). The enslaved were, in turn, prohibited from marrying and creating families and other kinship arrangements: children could be separated from their mothers at any point; enslaved women were sexually exploited by their owners and compelled to work as wet nurses and nannies; men and women were coupled by slaveowners (Morgan 2004). For Alys Eve Weinbaum (2019a), this is why "enslaved women's reproductive work ought to be recognized as the historical antecedent for the

work of women around the globe whose bodies are mined each day so that reproductive labor and living biological products can be accumulated at an ever-increasing and ever more lucrative pace." While biocapitalism is not the same as chattel slavery, the process of commodifying human biological life "must be understood as subtended by the long history of slave breeding" (Weinbaum 2019b: 8).

This form of reproductive control and extraction is not just confined to a dark past. As black and decolonial feminists remind us, today's articulation of biocapitalism needs to be analyzed in the context of the *continued* policing of nonwhite families and reproductive freedoms–in both the Global North *and* South. While fertility clinics, surrogacy, and various reproductive enhancement options increasingly are available to wealthy women, eugenic population control initiatives are used to target the racial poor (Roberts 2009; Wilson 2017). Such measures build on a long history of racial hygiene, coerced sterilization, and control of nonwhite women's reproductive freedoms. As Vergès shows in her book *Wombs of Women*, black women's fertility has often been "equated with a terrorist threat" (Vergès 2020: 60). In Réunion Island, one of France's five overseas departments, this paved the way for an aggressive birth control campaign in the 1970s, leading to the forced sterilizations of thousands of women on an annual basis. Today, this "management of women's wombs" (Vergès 2020: 3) continues unabated: state-sponsored sterilization campaigns are common across the Global South, especially so in India, Nigeria, and Brazil, where sterilization rates reach as high as 80 percent in certain regions (Wilson 2017). Backed by a range of international actors, including the Department for International Development (DfID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Gates Foundation, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and a variety of pharmaceutical companies, "family planning"— as it is often called—increasingly relies on new biotechnologies such as hormonal implants and injectables. Meanwhile, in the Global North, the surveillance of poor, nonwhite women's reproductive freedoms continues through the child welfare system (Roberts 2022). For example, in the United States, nonconsensual and invasive gynecological procedures have been carried out on migrant women in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody (Washington and Olivares 2020).

As these histories make clear, biocapital is not so much a new phase of biopolitics as it is a continuation of the reproductive control and extraction that has always been central to racial capitalism. The line between the human and the machine might be increasingly blurred by the biotechnological revolution but, as Wynter, Spillers, and Vergès remind us, it builds on a logic of corporeal power that has long been central to the animalization and exploitation of the enslaved and the colonized: from forced sterilizations to less obvious and seemingly benign racist family planning strategies. Biocapital, thus understood, is but the latest instance of capitalism's drive to dominate and extract from the racial reproductive body.

The above literatures on biocapital and incarceration have both placed corporeal power at the center of scholarly debate. This has been further accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As Carlo Salzani (2021) explains, "the COVID-19 pandemic is a biopolitical dream (or rather nightmare) come true." For some, this nightmare has laid bare our common vulnerability and interconnectedness: as Judith Butler (2021) argued at the height of the spread of COVID-19, the pandemic "brings home the fact that we are implicated in a shared world." For Butler, the "shared pandemic" thus exposed the fiction of unencumbered individualism and unravelled the need for a universal politics of care: in short, "we're all in this together." For others, such as Giorgio Agamben, the main problem with the pandemic was not so much the actual virus as the emergency measures put in place to control it. The political response to the pandemic, Agamben (2020b) claims, has made it clear that "the state of exception, to which governments have habituated us for some time, has truly become the normal condition." While he faced harsh critique for comparing COVID-19 to "the normal flus that affect us every year" (Agamben 2020a) and for likening COVID measures to practices employed by Germany's Nazi regime,[6] many share his sentiment that the "war on the virus" inaugurated a new phase of emergency measures and what some describe as a "coronopticon" (see e.g. The Economist 2020): that is, a system premised on the tight monitoring of the body, including quarantine measures, vaccine passports, and the proliferation of technologies that track movement.

In contrast to these narratives of common suffering (Butler) and generalized surveillance measures (Agamben), a black and decolonial analysis of corporeal power exposes the pandemic as part of a much longer history of suffocation and ruination. Consider, for example, how racialized discourses around who is infectious—and who is not—were common reference points throughout the pandemic.[7] This builds on a colonial script that frequently equated cleanliness with civilization. As Vergès (2021b) points out,

> Colonial slavery constructed the plantation as a domain of cleanliness and civilisation, standing apart from the unclean world of non-white people. Europe, said the colonial fiction, was a cradle of cleanliness and hygiene.

The figure of the "dirty native" was central to legitimizing European colonialism: "The first step towards lightening the white man's burden," states one famous advertisement from Pears Soap Company from 1890, "is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness" (cited in McClintock 1995: 32). Such beliefs also informed racial segregation policies in colonial cities, which sought to "protect" the "clean" and "healthy" Europeans by keeping them separate from the "infectious" local population (Newell 2019: 7). Today, this racialized ideology of hygiene and sanitation continues to shape how elites understand the global periphery, that is as "hot, dirty, and teeming with illiterate and

unhygienic bodies" (Raza Kolb 2020: 6). During the COVID-19 pandemic, migrants and racialized minorities faced sustained racist attacks for supposedly spreading the virus—which was also described as the "China virus." After the detection of the new Omicron variant in 2021, the United States and the European Union imposed travel bans on eight countries in southern Africa—despite the fact that the majority of them had no recorded cases of the Omicron variant.

Simultaneously, the pandemic also intensified previous forms of racialized state control and policing. Across the world, police were granted emergency powers to apprehend "potentially infectious" individuals. This exacerbated the threat posed to "already over-policed communities and the most marginalized and vulnerable sections of society" (Harris et al. 2022: 92; see also Braithwaite et al. 2022 and Koinova et al. 2023 for the targeting of migrants and refugees). Consequently, rather than a generalized attempt to control bare life, the lockdown measures that were implemented disproportionately targeted racialized communities, who—as Spillers, Wynter, and Vergès remind us—were the targets of high levels of state violence well before the start of the pandemic.

Alongside this spectacular organized violence, the COVID-19 pandemic also unleashed a new wave of silent organized abandonment. Indeed, those at the receiving end of police violence are simultaneously those who were exposed to disease at a higher rate. People from migrant and minority backgrounds made up a disproportionately large part of those contracting and dying from the virus during the first wave (Apea et al. 2021; Cooper 2020; Halliday et al. 2020; Lawrence 2020); Indigenous populations were among the hardest hit across the world (Alves et al. 2021; Conger 2020; Foxworth et al. 2022).[8] These racial disparities are mirrored on a global level. They existed across countries in the Global North despite variations in health-care systems or labor market patterns (Hooijer and King 2022) and were exacerbated globally by the vaccine apartheid (Gutiérrez and Kirk 2021).

While many have recognized the unequal ways in which the multiple consequences of the pandemic affected racialized populations, it is important to reflect on how this was not accidental but a result of the merging of multiple nodes of discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion. For example, the racial stratification of the labor market [9]—which is predicated upon restrictive visa regimes, unequal access to quality schooling and training, and racist biases in employment—meant that the middle classes were able to work from home while frontline health workers, delivery drivers, supermarket staff, and other essential workers were systematically exposed to premature death. As such, these disparities are the deadly consequence of a racial capitalist system in which "the upper strata of class society are able to treat the pandemic like a holiday while their domestic, landscape, and agricultural workers are even more exposed to death" (M. I. Asma 2020). This was further exacerbated by environmental racism, which created the conditions that exposed many poor, racialized,

and marginalized communities to much higher rates of contamination and poisoning. The consequences of this were a higher prevalence of pre-existing conditions that left people more vulnerable to the deadly effects of COVID-19. Those that fell ill and happened to belong to a racial minority were, moreover, more likely to have less access to quality health care, either because it was simply not available to them geographically or economically or because their concerns were not taken seriously, harking back to a long-standing culture of racial bias that downplays black people's medical concerns and complaints of pain (Eligon 2020; Smedley et al. 2003): a reminder, yet again, of how racism operates through a violent logic of animalization of the nonwhite body.

In the end, the COVID-19 pandemic is best understood not as a generalized state of emergency (Agamben), or as a shared condition of human suffering (Butler), but as part of racial capitalism's death-making normality. As a black and decolonial analysis makes clear, the unequal racialized outcomes of COVID-19 were created through multiple forms of corporeal power, realized as racial stratification, violence, exhaustion, abandonment, and exclusion long evident in the system of racial capitalism. While the pandemic itself may have been novel, the consequences it produced are not.[10]

Conclusion

In 2016, Debbie Lisle called upon IPS scholars to make full use of the transdisciplinary research agenda that IPS offers in bringing together the international, the political, and the social. Scholars looking at the role of bodies in IR heeded that call. Inspired by the work of Foucault, Agamben, and Butler, they pushed beyond IR's traditional focus on states and the international state system. Instead, they centered the body as the site of theorizing violence, war, and sovereignty. In doing so, they made important inroads into understanding the interplay between power, violence, and the body. Corporeal power here emerged as a concept of knowing the body—of making it intelligible—with the purpose to either include or exclude it from the dominant community and determine whether it was subjectable to violence. With this, they radically expanded our understanding of power in world politics. But they also promulgated an abstract and generalized concept of power that relied on theories steeped in methodological whiteness and colonial amnesia and that ignored the histories of empire, enslavement, and colonialism.

Inspired by the possibility that IPS offers in venturing beyond the confines of IR, in this chapter we have outlined an alternative approach to studying corporeal power inspired by the scholarship of Sylvia Wynter, Hortense Spillers, and Françoise Vergès. In examining the creation of death worlds as a structural feature of the modern/colonial world, these thinkers have much to offer IPS. They help us see corporeal power as a quotidian—rather than exceptional—process whereby raced, sexed, and gendered differences are simultaneously produced and policed. While reminding us that this

hierarchy of humanness is rooted in histories of empire, enslavement, and (settler) colonial dispossession, they also call on us to explore the multiple ways in which corporeal power continues to uphold the racial capitalist world of today. A twenty-first-century IPS—situated at the crossroads of the international, the political, and the social—would do well to heed these insights.

Notes

1. Methodological whiteness describes the failure to acknowledge the foundational role race has had in shaping the configuration of contemporary societies (Bhambra 2017) and the tendency to not see whiteness as a "racialized/ethnicized positioning at all" (Wekker 2016: 2). Colonial unknowing, meanwhile, is an actively constructed and reproduced process that erases the "entanglements" of racialization and colonization and how they shaped our present (Vimalasery, Pegues, and Goldstein 2016).
2. On the differences between Foucault and Agamben see also Edkins and Pin-Fat 2005.
3. See also Gatens (1996) for her analysis of the constitution of the body politic based on the exclusion of those—mainly women—who, due to their corporeal specificity, do not conform to the ideal of the body politic.
4. On colonial erasure in Butler's thought, see Danewid (2017).
5. This logic of animalization became evident once more in the aftermath of the murder of Michael Brown, who was shot to death by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014. The police officer, Darren Wilson, repeatedly referred to Brown as a "monster" and an "evil mutant," among other things (Bouie 2014).
6. Which, as commentators have explained, is not that surprising, but is in fact fully congruent with Agamben's theory of biopolitics (Bratton 2021).
7. See Federici (2021) for previous instances of scapegoating and the vilification of whole populations during epidemics.
8. For an overview of the multiple inequalities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, see Bambra, Lynch, and Smith 2021. For a detailed breakdown of the United States and the United Kingdom, see the Covid Tracking Project (2021) or the Office of National Statistics Census (2021).
9. See Rho, Brown, and Fremstad (2020) for a demographic overview of frontline workers in the United States.
10. This is equally true for the other "crises" that the COVID-19 pandemic is said to have induced, including the so-called "caregiving crisis." While the COVID-19 pandemic is often said to have caused an increased burden for mothers, in reality it exacerbated an already existing challenge to many mothers. It made the obstacles in reproductive labor that poor and marginalized women had long experienced more visible as they extended to the wider population when predominantly white, middle-class families were no longer able to outsource the care that they had come to rely on: "Put another way, it took the pandemic to compel privileged women to realize the challenges that less fortunate women had confronting all along" (Htun 2022: 635).

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PART VII

ACTORS AND AGENCY

CHAPTER 37

ON ACTORS, AGENCY, AND SUBJECTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

JUTTA WELDES AND RAYMOND DUVALL

INTRODUCTION

Like many contemporary Western[1] social sciences, International Relations (IR) both valorizes and celebrates the individual actor and his/her/their agency. There is a core analytical commitment across social science disciplines, again including IR, to provide systematic and theoretically well-based accounts of who does what, and especially who makes things of real consequence happen. This is the question of actors and their agency or, more simply, the question of agents—the "do-ers." Often in IR, diverse social collectivities, such as states, governments, international organizations, or transnational corporations, are viewed as agents. At the same time, that attribution is frequently understood as shorthand, as a second best that ultimately requires more adequate theories that reduce such aggregates to the individual persons who compose them as the true agents. In this view, the "do-ers," the agents of IR, the makers of history, are appropriately and necessarily individual persons, typically acting in conjunction with other individuals in social collectivities.

In this chapter, we situate a more social conceptualization of "the subject" in relation to a critical discussion of this traditional celebration of individual agency. The argument is organized as follows. We begin in the second section by asking how scholars of IR came to this widespread common-sense valorization of actors and their agency. We situate this agentic approach in a funnel of sorts, beginning broadly with the ontological individualism of liberal social and political theory, moving through the more specific methodological individualism of positivist philosophy of social science, and ending with the narrow but prized rational monads of choice-theoretic methodology. Of course, not all developments in IR and International Political Sociology (IPS) sit within this funnel. Its purpose is not to encompass all of IPS or IR but to illustrate and account for the traditional predominance of "actors" and their "agency" in the explanations of Western social sciences and IR. In a brief transition section, we then discuss the importance of power in relation to actors, agency, and subjects and how power is reconceptualized with a more social understanding of "do-ers." In the third section, we ask what effect introducing "the social" might have, simultaneously shifting attention

from the constitutive actor and agency to the socially constituted "subject." We discuss three interrelated understandings of how "the social" constitutes the subject, which we conceive as reflecting (imperfectly distinguishable) scales of "the social." At the macro-social scale, we conceptualize the social as discourse and structure; at the meso scale, we conceptualize the social as relationality; at the micro scale, we conceptualize the social as the context of the moment of action. We then demonstrate that these scales necessarily work together.

Situating actors and agents: How have we come to celebrate actors and their agency?

The typical focus in IR on actors and their agency is the direct consequence of several long-standing developments in social theory and the social sciences. In this section, and by way of situating the more social conception of "do-ers" proposed below, we highlight the contributions of three such developments, briefly laying out how, separately and together, they valorize agency and celebrate the individual actor as a, and usually the, fundamental unit of social analysis.[2] We begin with liberal social and political theory with its fundamentally individualist moral and analytical assumptions. Liberal individualism is intensified within the social sciences by the coming to prominence of positivist philosophy of social science with its strictures of methodological individualism, deductive explanations, and often the need for scientific micro-foundations. Even more recently, the elevation of economics as the flagship "scientific" social science put choice-theoretic methodologies—e.g. rational choice theory and game theory—at the heart of (especially Anglo-American) social sciences and IR, which again reinforced the focus on actors and agency.

Liberal individualism

Liberal social and political theory, based on Thomas Hobbes (e.g. 2012 [1651]) and John Locke (e.g. 2012 [1689]), among many others, foregrounded the individual, autonomous, rational, rights-bearing human agent in the analysis of social and political life. From the outset, these characteristics were depicted as inherent to human nature, as timeless, abstract, and universal features of human life. The liberal model of "man"[3] conceptualized individuals analytically as atomistic, as "prior to and comprising social groups" (Peterson 1990: 311), an assumption vividly captured by Hobbes's famous "mushrooms, come to full maturity, without all kind of engagement with each other" (Hobbes 1991 [1648, 1652]: 205).[4] The atomized individual is thus autonomous—is only contingently, not fundamentally, embedded in social relations—and is assumed to have a singular, certain, and given identity (Di Stefano 1983: 636). At the same time, the individual actor is assumed to be motivated by "strictly self-originating and self-

contained" interests (Di Stefano 1983: 637). Individuals act rationally in the pursuit of those self-interests and do so autonomously and self-sufficiently. This ontological individualism firmly implanted the liberal individual actor at the center of our contemporary social imaginaries, at the moral center of much normative social and political theory, and at the analytical and methodological heart of much of explanatory social science (e.g. Hayek 1944; von Mies 1949; cf. Bird 2004; Lukes 2006 [1973]). And this conception remains at the core, even as caveats, modifications, and pretenses of outright rejection have characterized much scholarly literature in recent decades. The paradox is that one is hard-pressed to find many scholars today who voice an acceptance of the idealized model of the liberal individual in its full form as sketched in this paragraph, yet IR remains deeply rooted in this conception of ontological individualism.

Ontological individualism is firmly embedded in much of traditional IR theory and analysis. Whether referring literally to concrete human individuals or treating institutions as if they too were individuals, as in Wendt's claim that "states are people too" (2004: 291; 1999: 215–224, cf. Jackson 2004), much of IR begins from the analytical assumptions of self-interested individual actors and their agency. This liberal agent appears in many guises: as the individual foreign policy decision-makers of foreign policy analysis (e.g. Snyder, et al. 2002) and as the statesmen of classical realism (e.g. Morgenthau 1948), as the corporate agent of international political economy (e.g. Vernon 1971) and as the institutional actors of neoliberal institutionalism (e.g. Keohane 1988), as the collective actors that are international and nongovernmental organizations (e.g. Krasner 1983) and as the rational, national interest-pursuing state in neo-realism's anarchic international system (e.g. Waltz 1979). Analytically and normatively, the "do-ers" of IR largely remain the individual "actors with their agency" of liberal theory.

Methodological individualism

A second and interrelated strand of theorizing further cemented individual actors and their agency into the core of the social sciences and IR. The strictures of positivist philosophy of social science (e.g. Compte 1830–1842; Mill 1874) came to define proper "scientific" knowledge for many social scientists and IR scholars (e.g. King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). Positivism can be defined in terms of four central commitments: a deductive-nomological, and thus predictive, account of scientific explanation; the belief in an objective observation language distinct from (unscientific) theoretical languages; the pursuit of objectivity and value-free empirical knowledge claims; and the belief in the methodological unity of the sciences (e.g. Fay 1975: 13). For the purposes of our argument, three interlinked components of this wider positivist project are especially important: methodological individualism (MI), the search for micro-foundations, and the deductive-nomological model of explanation.

In the face of repeated debates over the proper relations between actors and the social, between "agents and social structures" (Wendt 1987) or between "methodological individualism" and "methodological holism/collectivism," positivism asserts MI as the "unimpeachable first principle" of social explanation (Weldes 1989: 354–355). MI is the argument that proper social scientific explanation must ultimately be rooted in claims about individuals (because of the foundational liberal assumption of ontological individualism), using individual-level observation terms, located at the individual level of analysis, because only these claims can be made in the objective "observation" language required of science. Reference to social wholes or social structures, in contrast, rely on unscientific, because unobservable, "theoretical" terms and are thus to be eschewed (e.g. Agassi 1960; O'Neill 1973).

This means that any theory or explanation making reference to *social* facts, such as structures, must be reduced to its micro-foundations because "we shall not have arrived at rock-bottom explanations of … large scale phenomena until we have deduced an account of them from statements about the dispositions, beliefs, resources and interrelations of individuals" (Watkins 1968: 271; Nagel 1961).[5] This search for individual-level micro-foundations is the social science version of the wider positivist goal of unifying all science through inter-theoretic reduction, in which "the properties, concepts, explanations, or methods from one scientific domain (typically at higher levels of organization) can be deduced from or explained by the properties, concepts, explanations, or methods from another domain of science (typically at lower levels of organization)" (Brigandt and Love 2017; Brodbeck 1958; Little 1998).[6] We thus need to be able to translate the terms of the macro theory into the terms of the micro theory without loss of meaning, and then deduce the explanatory laws, propositions, and hypotheses of the one from the other (Weldes 1989: 357). In science, we should thus be able to translate and deduce, say, biological explanations from chemical ones, and in the social sciences, we should be able to translate and deduce Marxist social or structural explanations from, say, individual-level game-theoretic ones (e.g. Elster 1982, 1985; Roemer 1986). Ultimately, perhaps, we should aspire to translate and deduce all social phenomena, including IR, from quantum physics (e.g. Wendt 2015).[7]

These two components of the positivist project further entrenched individualism in social scientific explanation. And this is not surprising. As Richard Miller (1984: 304–313) argued, in designing positivism/empiricism, some of its main architects—for example, Popper (1934, 1936, 1945), Hempel (1942), and Hayek (1944)—were principally interested in creating a philosophy of social science that promoted precisely a liberal politics while denying scientific legitimacy to "collectivist creeds" (von Mies 1949: 151–152), whether e.g. Marxist or fascist, which they considered to be extremist theories offering "sinister explanations" (Watkins 1968: 274). Methodological individualism and liberal individualism were related from the outset.[8]

The requirement that inter-theoretic reduction be deductive corresponds to the more general positivist commitment to the deductive-nomological form of explanation (e.g. Hempel 1942; Elster 1983). For an explanation to be considered objective and scientifically rigorous, this model requires that the explanandum, that which is to be explained, can be shown invariably to follow from the explanans—the necessary or initial conditions and the covering laws—and thus also to allow, inversely, for prediction. Explanations that allow for prediction, allow for control, and thus for the exercise of power (Fay 1975: 29–47). We return to power below.

Choice-theoretic methodologies

Finally, and more recently, the social sciences, including diverse sub-fields of IR, succumbed to the veneration of neo-classical/Marshallian-marginalist economics as the most scientific and hence successful—in positivist terms—of the social sciences.[9] Contemporary economics came to be widely perceived closely to approximate the positivist principles of appropriate scientific explanation just discussed (McCloskey 1987: 7).[10] Repeated economic crises notwithstanding, since at least the 1950s, both the econometric and mathematical modeling associated with economics and, more pertinently here, its choice-theoretic methodologies have been adopted as good, or even best, social science practice across diverse disciplines (see, amongst many examples, Downs 1957; Schelling 1960; Homans 1961; Blau 1964; Olsen 1965; Popkin 1979; Bueno de Mesquita 1981; North 1981; Brams 1985; Elster 1985; Roemer 1986).[11]

Choice-theoretic methodologies—emblematically rational choice and game theory—are presented as offering precisely the desirable components of good explanation outlined above (e.g. Elster 1983; Keohane 1988). They are both thoroughly individualist and properly deductive and predictive. Whether maximizing or satisficing, whether modeling strategic interactions that are zero or variable sum, whether playing conventional games of complete information or Bayesian games with incomplete information, and whether deployed metaphorically or as complex mathematical models, these methodologies begin with the liberal ontological and methodological individual. They posit, begin with, and remain with a pre-constituted "actor" with their given individual preferences (i.e. interests) and utility schedules.[12] Within a choice-theoretic model, the individual attempts, perhaps under specified constraints, including diverse models of interaction, to achieve their desired outcomes rationally, or as rationally as possible under the circumstances permitted by the specified model.

Proponents of choice-theoretic approaches, like John Roemer's defense of "analytic" or rational-choice Marxism, are often quite explicit that what rational choice and game theory bring is precisely the deductive and predictive capacity of axiomatic theory.[13] Roemer, for example, explicitly sought to overcome the predictive "failures" of Marxist theory by deploying game theory to develop a "general theory of exploitation and class"

(Roemer 1982) from which Marx's more specific theory of exploitation under capitalism could be deduced.

Transition: Power, agency, and subjects

What we have discussed up to this point may seem out of place in a volume on IPS. But it has an important role for two reasons: it sets the conceptual background against which a more appropriately *social* conception of action and agency captured by the notion of "the subject" is distinguished (the focus of the remainder of the chapter) and it highlights how the individualist conception of agents, as distinct from the socially embedded conception of the subject, has come appreciably to pervade so much of the social sciences and IR. The lure of the individual actor detached from social constitution, even if not the fully idealized model of the liberal agent or the purely rational choice-theoretic monad, is a powerful draw as the key to answering the question of who makes important outcomes happen in IR. It often displaces more effectively socialized understandings of subjects in the making of history. It also underpins the prevailing understanding of other central analytical concepts, such as power.

Power is amongst the core concepts of IR in both its positivist and its post-positivist expressions. The traditional focus on actors and their agency, rather than on socially constituted subjects, significantly affects how power is theorized. With a focus on individual agents, whether human individuals or institutional actors such as international organizations and states, power is conceptualized as an attribute of actors and is, accordingly, limited to what Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall have called "compulsory" power. Compulsory power is an attribute that "an actor possesses and may use knowingly as a resource to shape the actions and/or conditions of action of others" (Barnett and Duvall 2005: 9). This is a behavioral view of power as "power over," like Steven Luke's "first face" or "one-dimensional view" of power (Lukes 1974: 11–15). It is perhaps most famously captured in Robert Dahl's dictum that power is the ability of A to get B to do what B would not ordinarily do (Dahl 1957: 203–204). Since, as we have argued throughout, IR typically privileges individual actors and their agency, the accompanying common-sense understanding of power is necessarily this fundamentally agentic conception. But it also means that (otherwise) post-positivist scholars who retain this conceptualization of power as an actor attribute are implicitly adopting a theoretical framework of, and thus reproducing, the de-socialized—or liberal individual—agent.

In contrast, when theorists address the concept of power with a social understanding of action (i.e. in terms of properly social subjects, as discussed below), "power" takes on a range of other forms. It might be "institutional power," determining, amongst other things, "how formal and informal institutions enable some actors to shape the behavior or circumstances of socially distant others" (Barnett and Duvall 2005: 16). Even more "socially," it might be "structural" or "productive" power if residing in the structured

relations or discursive practices that are constitutive of subjects themselves, that "define what kinds of social beings actors are" (Barnett and Duvall 2005: 18). How scholars of IR think power—and a number of other core concepts, such as sovereignty (e.g. Biersteker and Weber 1996) or diplomacy (e.g. Neumann 2005)—crucially affects whether their perspective on the making of history—the "do-ing" of productive significance—focuses on actors and their agency or on the socially embedded practices of subjects. The dominance of compulsory power in IR highlights the ubiquity of the conception of individualized actors and their agency rather than of socially constituted subjects.

Like many social sciences, then, IR has come to be heavily dominated by what we might call a liberal myth of the individual sovereign agent who traditionally sits, both morally and analytically, at the heart of IR explanatory practices. From the perspective of IR, these cumulative, mutually reinforcing individualist assumptions have produced a common sense in which the focus on, and language of, "actors" and "agency" seems unproblematic. In fact, however, as we have argued, a great deal of sustained ideological labor has gone into the construction of that common sense. The focus on individual agents is itself an *historical and social product of social structures*, including prominently, capitalism, imperialism, and patriarchy (e.g. Peterson 1990: 312; McKinnon 1983), as well as discourses of "scientific knowledge" (e.g. Fay 1975; Hempel 1942; Popper 1934); various disciplinary commitments (e.g. Keohane 1988); social relations of academic rigor and prestige (e.g. Keohane 1989; cf. Weber 1994), and modern moral-ethical judgment, amongst others. All of which has brought us neatly to the social.

Situating subjects: What happens if we recognize actors and their agency as fundamentally social? Or, why individualist theorizing is wrong-headed

While this story of individual actors and their agency has been prominent in much of Western social science and IR, it is both fundamentally wrong-headed and by no means the whole story of contemporary social science or contemporary IR. Much of critical social theory—whether, for instance, Marxist, feminist, post-structural, or decolonial—and the attendant critical social sciences they anchor have recognized that people make history but not under circumstances of their own choosing (to paraphrase just one well-known version of this argument, i.e. Marx 1852: 300). Drawing in different ways and to different extents on the importance of social relationality, intersubjectivities, and historicity, critical social theories work to displace the notion of individual agents, of actors and their agency, refocusing attention onto "the subject"—the irreducibly and always already socially constituted beings whose very constitution, as well as attendant

interests, capacities, actions, and practices, make history and generate the important outcomes of social life.

How is the subject always already social?

If, in contrast to the ontological and methodological individualism discussed above, we recognize that actors and their agency are fundamentally social, we need to ask where and how actors and their agency *as subjects* are socially constituted: where do they come from and with what effects? We want to suggest (at least) three interrelated answers to this question, each of which extends analysis beyond the confines of individualism and directs attention to imperfectly but suggestively distinct scales of sociality.

The macro scale

First, subjects are socially constituted in broad social-cultural contexts of action. The analytical focus here is on *the macro-scalar conception of the social—discourse, structure, and systems of signification and meaning*.

People are social subjects.[14] We each occupy any number of categories of distinguishable subject positions, which pre-exist us and define what "type" of person we are, with what interests and social capacities. Any number of important categories of subject are produced across broad segments of humanity. These are the subjects of macro-historical discourses and macro-social structures of meaning and practices: gendered subjects ("feminine," "masculine," "queer," "trans"), racialized subjects ("black," "white," "Hispanic," "Japanese," "Ainu"), subjects defined by their relations to the means of production of value ("landowner," "serf," "capitalist," "wage labor"), imperial and/or colonial subjects ("native," "slave," "mestizo," "Viceroy"), and "Westphalian" subjects ("state," "citizen," "stateless person," "asylum seeker"). In this light, subjects and their "agencies"—that is, their interests and their capacity (or not) to shape important social outcomes, to make history—are the product of socially widely shared systems of signification and meaning, produced through discursive (i.e. both linguistic and nonlinguistic) practices. These systems are the dominant discourses—and their sedimentation in macro-social structures and institutions—that define historical periods, but which themselves have histories and change over time and through altered social practices (see e.g. Foucault 1977, 1978, 1988 [1986], 1990 [1985]). As is recognized in diverse theoretical perspectives (e.g. Feyerabend 1965; Derrida 1974, 1978), and in contrast to positivist claims to an objective and empirical observation language, in a more fully social approach, meaning is always both social and theoretical. The meanings of the categories of gender, race, class, and so on, and their significance, are made—they are constituted—through the discursive practices of myriad subjects. Far from being mushrooms "without all engagement with each other,"

subjects are constituted through socially shared systems of meaning and significance (and, as we discuss below, those subjects' practices, in turn, make these structures and systems).

Adopting a macro-scalar conception of the social therefore means, as Foucault put it, that "One has to dispense with the *constituent subject* [i.e. the "agent"] … to arrive at an analysis which can account for the *constitution of the subject* within an historical framework" (Foucault 1980 [1977]: 117, emphasis added). Subjects, with their interests and social in/capacities—or forms of agency—are constituted; they are products of power. But this is not compulsory power as an attribute of specific agents. Instead, "the individual is an effect of the productive power of socially shared and historically situated discursive practices and institutions" (Foucault 1980 [1977]: 98).

Racialized discourses and structures, for instance, socially constitute differently empowered racialized subjects but do so differently across time and space, with and without the concept of "race" per se (e.g. Crenshaw et al. 1996; Heng 2018). As Edward Said famously demonstrated, Western Orientalist discourse and its structures and institutions of knowledge create the privileged "Occidental" subject with specific capacities, which include "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said 1978: 11). A modernizing Japan in the late 1800s also developed a discourse of race, but it functioned differently in the specifics. Situated in the context of Western imperialism, this Japanese discourse made possible the constitution of a racialized "Japanese" subject with its own imperial ambitions in Asia:

> In their attempts to emulate the western powers by also becoming imperial states, Japanese intellectuals asserted the existence of a distinct 'Japanese' race. In doing so, they also asserted their superiority over groups such as the indigenous Ainu and Okinawans (Siddle 2011, 151) as well as other Asians as a way to position themselves higher in the developmental racial hierarchy.
>
> (Yamashiro 2013: 148)

Capitalist discourse has of course also been crucial for hundreds of years in much of the world, constituting subject positions of "capitalist" and "wage-labor," although generally endowed with more palatable liberal labels such as "management" and "employees." These subjects, with their attendant in/capacities and conflicting interests, are deeply embedded in and produced by a socially shared common sense, even as the particular characteristics of each of those subject positions is different today—for example, with neoliberal globalization and the more recent development of the platform and gig economies—than it was in, say, the mid-twentieth century (e.g. Harvey and Krohn-Hansen 2018).

The productive power of macro-scalar discourses, social structures, and institutions, like race and class, does not, of course, neatly constitute discrete and singular subjects. Rather, the vibrancy and complexity of social life is due, at least in part, to the

simultaneity of multiple discourses and the overlapping of their institutionalization in macro-scalar social structures. This means that any social theory of IR is inadequate to the extent that it is inattentive, in analyzing the production of subjects, both to intertextuality—the interweaving of and mutual meaning making across diverse discourses (e.g. Bakhtin 1981; Hooper 2001; Van Veeren 2009; Fiske 2010)—and to intersectionality—the interrelations of multiple structures of dis/privilege (as institutionalized discourses) and the attendant compounding of unequal social capacities (e.g. Carbado et al. 2013; Tomlinson 2013; Crenshaw 2023).

At the macro scale, discourses and their structures and institutions interact. Capitalism is patriarchal but in different ways at different times. Gender and gendered divisions of labor intersect differently with primitive accumulation (e.g. Federici 2004) than with global neoliberal forms of accumulation (e.g. Mies 2014). Capitalism is also diversely racialized, producing "racialized capitalisms" that also change over time (e.g. Robinson 1983; Battacharya 2018). As a result, and at the same time, no concrete person occupies just one such structure of dis/privilege, occupying just one subject position: no one is only gendered, or only raced, or only either a citizen or "state-less." The productive power of these intertextual and intersectional constitutive discourses and structures is formidable, but it is neither isolated nor determinative. Instead, intertextualities and intersectionalities play out in indeterminate, historically and contextually specific ways, if also within structurally circumscribed boundaries.

From this macro-scalar conception of the social, the making of history—the "do-ing"—in contemporary IR results from the (contingent, but not infinitely elastic range of) actions of social subjects produced intertextually and inter-sectionally by multiple discourses and structures of power and dis/privilege.

The meso scale

Second, subjects are socially constituted in direct relational interaction with others. The analytical focus here is on *the meso-scalar conception of the social—relationalities among subjects*.

On this meso scale, the discourses and social structures constitutive of subjects are, by contrast with those at the macro scale, less comprehensive of vast swathes of humanity and are instead bounded by, or tied to, the direct and tangible networks of relations in which people are embedded. Like at the macro social scale, discourses and the social structures they institutionalize constitute subjects at the meso scale through the workings of productive power. At this scale, however, subjects are constituted with distinct and tangible interests and social in/capacities in relation to each other and, accordingly, with distinct abilities directly to shape outcomes in more bounded networks through the exercise of, for example, "institutional" power (Barnett and Duvall 2005: 16).

At the macro scale, discourses shape the meaning of statehood, warfare, diplomacy, market exchange, bureaucracy, tourism, and so on. At the meso scale, they constitute the head of state, the general, the ambassador, the chief executive officer (CEO), the international civil servant, and the tourist, each of which is a distinct subject position with attendant interests, resources, and established networks—many of them hierarchical—that provide levers to shape others and to shape practices and outcomes. The subjects of this meso-level productive power are not Foucault's individual-level "constituent subjects" or liberal individual agents per se but rather are socially constituted subjects with specific capacities in networks or institutions.

Examples of subject positions constituted relationally, in more "localized" discourses and through meso-scalar networks/institutions, might include "ally," "soldier," "diplomat," "international civil servant," and "tourist," amongst the literally countless other social subjects in their lived interactions in IR. "The tourist," often ignored and generally undertheorized in IR, is a good example. The Western "eco" tourist on a bespoke tour of Cairo's Garbage City is constituted as a quintessentially "international neoliberal subject" (itself defined by macro-scalar Westphalian and capitalist discourses) in and through their meso-level relations with Garbage City residents, who live by sorting and recycling the city's garbage (Wynne-Hughes 2015). These privileged eco-tourist subjects have diverse interests and capacities, including to consume the "Other"—"to see something 'gritty', 'authentic' and 'real' " for their own edification (Wynne-Hughes 2015: 843)—to inject needed tourism income into Cairo and Egypt, and to "develop themselves" (Wynne-Hughes 2015: 844) through these hierarchical relations and practices. Similarly, the American/Western "backpacker" tourist in Vietnam, exercising their "civil right" to tour (Alneng 2002: 463), is constituted in diverse relations both to the local Vietnamese population and to a very particular American/Hollywood vision of the "Vietnam War" (a war distinct from what the Vietnamese understand to have been the "American War"). The backpacker's interests and capacities include the "right" to tour in the first place, the ability to consume the "Other" and their culture, the limited perception of the "Vietnam" they are touring defined exclusively in Hollywood's terms (Alneng 2002: 462–469), and the reproduction of "the Vietnam War" through purchasing war-themed souvenirs, even decades on from the actual war (Alneng 2002: 471–472). The institutional and productive power that constitutes the Western eco and backpacker tourist subjects does so relationally, simultaneously commodifying and objectifying the non-Western "Other" in their own homes and cultures.

This meso-scalar conception of the social highlights the relational constitution of the subject and the attendant interests and in/capacities that emerge in these relations to the Other. While it is intimately intertwined with the macro scale, and while the distinction between them is uneasily arbitrary, conceptualizing the social constitution of subjects on these different scales highlights the complexity and multiplicity of subject formation processes in IR.

The micro scale

Third, subjects are socially constituted as specific kinds of subjects *in the doing*. The analytical focus here is on *the micro-scalar conception of the social—the subject at the moment of action*.

At this narrowest of our three scales, the discursive production of meaning and, in turn, the social constitution of subjects and their interests and capacities is once again operative, but here at the specific moment of action. At the micro scale, and following Judith Butler and earlier social theorists (e.g. Nietzsche 1996 [1887]), we want to claim that there is no "do-er" before the deed—the action itself constitutes the subject (e.g. Butler 1990: 25).

Despite a similar focus on the micro scale, we are making a fundamentally different argument to Cynthia Enloe's celebrated focus on micro-relations—on the "margins, silences and bottom rungs" (Enloe 1996)—that make possible the macro-structures of IR. Enloe relentlessly and effectively exposes the micro-level gendered relations and practices that are required to sustain macro-level structures and power in IR. She demonstrates, for instance, how the interwoven micro-relations engaged in by "base women"—generals' wives, prostitutes, laundresses, women "in uniform" and many others—make possible practices like US forward basing and the foreign, security, and military policies that relied on them, such as the US Cold War "containment" policy to prevent the spread of comunism (e.g. Enloe 2014: ch. 4). While telling in its own right, Enloe's version of micro-level analysis does not challenge the givenness of the diverse actors she studies—the "base women," prostitutes, chamber maids, Victorian lady travelers, garment workers, and diplomats' wives—or their agency. While we agree that investigations like Enloe's offer salutary lessons for IR, we are instead arguing for examining the constitution of those subjects, along with the attendant constitution of their interests and in/capacities, to begin with, in the micro-scalar "do-ing."

For instance, a concrete person, already constituted at the macro scale, as, say, a black, working-class female citizen (through macro-level discourses of race, class, gender, and the Westphalian state) and, at the meso scale, as an auntie and a backpacker (through meso-level relations and practices of kinship and tourism) becomes "a soldier" at the micro scale at the moment of "soldiering," of acting in the socially meaningful practices that are "boot camp," or "patrolling," or "presenting arms," or "flying a drone," or "killing the enemy." Simultaneously, those practices, and the militarized discourses and the military structures and institutions of which they are a part, only themselves exist in their instantiation. There is no military, and there are no soldiers, without iterative performances of soldiering. Similarly, a concrete person, already constituted at the macro scale as a white, middle-class woman from England and, at the meso scale, as a school teacher and a mother, becomes "an anti-nuclear activist" at the moment of "protesting," of enacting socially meaningful practices, themselves discursively constituted as acts of rebellion or resistance, such as "singing

and marching," or "blockading," or "creating human chains" at a nuclear base like Greenham Common (e.g. Eschle 2017; Eschle and Bartlett 2023).

This micro-scalar conception of the social highlights the production of subjects with their interests and capacities to be "do-ers" in the moment of acting. At the same time, it underlines that the discursive structures and the subjects they constitute are, fundamentally, mutually constitutive.

Combining scales

All three of these scales of the social are, of course, in play simultaneously, at all times. We distinguish them analytically to highlight that, where the liberal individual subject is not taken as the given "agent" from the outset, questions of the social production of subjects can be, and often are, approached by privileging one or the other of these scales. Much social scientific or IR scholarship does not overtly integrate the historical discourses and the broad social relations of dominant social structures with the more immediate and tangible social relations of institutions and groups and then with the highly specific moment of action in the production of subjects. In principle, nonetheless, multiple scales of sociality are always in play.

For example, the canonical US representation of the US discovery of the Soviet deployment of nuclear-capable missiles in Cuba in October 1962 as "the Cuban missile crisis"—generally considered the most dangerous nuclear crisis of the Cold War (US Department of State, Office of the Historian n.d.)—was discursively constituted as *a* "crisis" and as *this specific* "crisis" through the constitution of subjects and their interests and in/capacities at a variety of interacting scales. In an admittedly rough rendering of a more complex argument,[15] we can see various scales at work.

- At the macro scale, US "Cold War" discourse constituted three main subjects: the peaceful and democratic United States, the duplicitous, totalitarian Soviet Union, and the puppet state, Cuba. Each subject was provided with attendant interests, in/capacities, plausible and implausible courses of action, and normative judgments. The Cold War US subject, constituted as the "leader of the free world," brought specific interests and capacities. For example, it was taken for granted from the outset of "the Cuban missile crisis" that the US national interest required the removal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba. No other interest was possible, or considered (Weldes 1999a: 54–59). Enabled by its superpower capabilities—amongst them nuclear, military, and diplomatic institutions and power—the responsibilities of "leadership" required that the United States act defensively to restore the integrity of the "Western Hemisphere," to prevent further "communist expansion," and to protect the enslaved Cuban people (amongst other objectives). Accepting the "secret" and "aggressive" Soviet missile deployment was impossible, not considered because not conceivable.
- At the meso scale, a more specialized US discourse of nuclear weapons and Cold War nuclear relations constituted US nuclear weapons as both legitimate and defensive, Soviet nuclear weapons as necessarily offensive and thus illegitimate, and nuclear-capable weapons in Cuba as simply unacceptable. The "secrecy" of the Soviet missile deployment in Cuba, in contrast to the "openness" of US extraterritorial missile deployments in, for example, Turkey, determined that these Soviet weapons were offensive, that they upset the global nuclear strategic balance, that they indirectly threatened the already embattled status of West Berlin, and that they required removal, even at the cost of a spectacularly dangerous nuclear confrontation that took the world to "the brink" of nuclear war (e.g. Hastings 2022).
- At the micro scale, in his interactions with Khrushchev, Kennedy performed "US leadership," embodying the rational crisis management and the superior "leadership" expected of the United States. As Arthur Schlesinger put it, in a remarkable bit of constitutive hagiography, Kennedy's "combination of toughness and restraint, of will, nerve and wisdom, so brilliantly controlled, so matchlessly calculated … dazzled the world" (Schlesinger 1965: 841). This dazzling subject was "eyeball to eyeball" (Rusk, in Abel 1966: 153) with a Khrushchev publicly constituted as the enemy—aggressive and irrational—but who ultimately "blinked" (Abel 1966: 153). Castro, the duped and "bearded" revolutionary,[16] was largely rendered invisible in the micro-level "do-ing" of "the Cuban missile crisis" and particularly in its resolution.

These three (admittedly fuzzy) scales came together—and none could have functioned alone—to construct the "subjects" of "the Cuban missile crisis" as it unfolded from the US perspective. These subjects underpin and define the subsequent, persistent, and rarely contested myth of these events as "the Cuban missile crisis." Nonetheless, these "do-ers" of history were social subjects all the way down.

This fundamental sociality is rendered even more evident if we examine alternative narratives of the events of October 1962. The Soviet narrative of "the Caribbean Crisis" (e.g. Gromyko 1971a, 1971b; Khrushchev 1970) and the Cuban narrative of "the October crisis" (e.g. Dorticós 1962; Castro 1992) were constituted out of different macro-, meso-, and micro-scalar discourses and practices.[17]

- These two narratives, while not identical, drew on a macro discourse not primarily of Cold War but of US imperialism and neocolonialism, particularly in the "Western hemisphere." They constituted an aggressive, expansionist, and counter-revolutionary US imperial subject determined to eradicate "the Cuban revolution." The Soviet socialist subject had an "obligation" to "protect Cuba's existence as a Socialist country" (Khrushchev 1970: 545–546) and especially to defend Cuba "as an independent sovereign Socialist state" (Gromyko, in Allyn, Blight, and Welch 1992: 148). In "the October crisis," sovereignty was central to Cuba's subject position, its interests, and its legitimate objectives (e.g. Castro 1992: 337; Weldes 1999a: 34–37).
- At a meso scale of relations, these narratives constituted Cuba as the victim of a long history of US intervention and, since 1959, of hostile attempts to overthrow the Cuban revolution, from the clandestine machinations of Operation Mongoose (including attempts to assassinate Castro) to the 1961 invasion at Playa Girón (the Bay of Pigs) (e.g. Khrushchev 1961: 9; Dorticós 1962: 370; Castro, in Szulc 1986: 578). On the meso scale of nuclear discourse and relations, the Soviet missile deployment, in principle no different from the US missiles in Turkey pointed at Moscow, was straightforwardly defensive, a deterrent designed to protect Cuba, a Soviet ally, from the anticipated forthcoming US invasion (e.g. Khrushchev 1970: 545–546; Castro, in Szulc 1986: 580–582).
- At the micro scale, at the moment of action, these narratives diverged. In "the Caribbean Crisis," Khrushchev instantiated the Soviet Union's global socialist leadership, triumphantly protecting Cuba and its revolution (Khrushchev 1970: 553–556) whilst simultaneously successfully using the Soviet missiles in Cuba to effect the removal of US missiles from Turkey (e.g. Allyn, Blight, and Welch 1992: 165). In the "do-ing" of history, Khrushchev effectively enacted the Soviet superpower subject. The narrative of "the October Crisis," in contrast, highlights that, in typical neocolonial fashion, Cuba and Castro were excluded from the superpowers' crisis resolution. Castro did not want the missiles removed and, as he later explained with considerable understatement, he "would have preferred a more satisfactory solution, with the participation of Cuba in the discussion" (in Lockwood 1967: 200). At the moment of action, Cuba's and Castro's interests were comprehensively marginalized, and their subject comprehensively incapacitated, in all three crises.

The discourses, structures, and systems of signification and meaning operating within and between the different scales are sometimes remarkably congruent. They can construct a dominant understanding—like that of "the Cuban missile crisis"—that, in specific contexts, is taken for granted, is treated as common sense and as unproblematically true. In such cases, alternative narratives, with different subjects, interests, and in/capacities, either do not emerge at all or are rejected, literally, as "nonsense," or at best as politically interested and thus suspect. In the US context, the narratives of "the Caribbean crisis" and "the October crisis" remain largely invisible, and those constituent claims that are visible are derided and rejected. This is true in IR as well, where the continued invisibility of these alternative narratives exemplifies the productive power of the fundamentally colonial nature of IR as a discipline (see Laffey and Weldes 2008).

But these different structures and practices, at the different scales, do not, of course, always pull in the same direction. They can, and indeed often do, produce tensions and contradictions, gaps and disjunctures. All such tensions and contradictions create possibilities for resistance, creativity, and change. But this resistance and creativity should not be understood only, or even primarily, as the "agency" of liberal individuals. Possibilities for resistance and creativity emerge out of the fundamental sociality of the subjects—the socially constituted "do-ers" and makers of history. Possibilities for resistance and creativity can be enhanced if we foreground analytically the profoundly social character of the makers of history, recognizing that and how they are made

possible by the interplay of intertextuality and inter-sectionality at interacting scales of sociality and through productive power.

Conclusion

We have argued that the ongoing valorization in IR of the individual "actor" and their "agency" continues to squeeze out widespread consideration of the fundamentally *social* production of subjects—of "do-ers" and "do-ing"—to begin with. This social production is complex: it takes place at different scales through diverse discourses and social structures, relations, and interactions. It is both intertextual and intersectional. It is sensitive to historical variations in the structures, relations, and interactions at the various scales. It brings with it an expansion and reconceptualization of power not only as a narrow, agentic compulsory power but also as more social forms of institutional, structural, and productive power. It brings with it a corresponding expansion and reconceptualization of politics as, amongst other things, fundamentally about productive power and the constitution and reproduction of "subjects" as "do-ers."

Because focusing solely on the liberal individual actor and their agency produces incomplete explanations of IR phenomena at best, and misleading or incorrect explanations at worst, it is crucial for scholarship in IR and IPS to reflect on the implicit ontological, epistemological, and normative presuppositions undergirding our dominant theoretical approaches. As counter-hegemonic critical social theory—whether Marxist, decolonial, feminist, or otherwise—has long demonstrated, IR scholars can gain crucial insights from recognizing the fundamentally social constitution of agency—of "do-ing"—that we have outlined here and treating its investigation in concrete situations as both a significant empirical puzzle and a locus of creativity and critique. We are not, of course, arguing that IR/IPS should abandon all questions that can be answered by assuming pre-constituted actors and their agency. Such questions will always remain interesting and important. Rather, we are arguing that significant analytical traction is gained by recognizing and foregrounding theoretically the constitution and reproduction of the fundamentally socially constituted subjects and their interests and capacities and by investigating them historically and empirically.

IPS is hospitable ground for these insights (see e.g. Jackson and Nexon 1999; Nexon and Pouliot 2013). More work that takes this theoretical insight seriously and that demonstrates empirically the detailed mechanisms through which the individual "agency" typically treated as pre-constituted is, in fact, constituted and reproduced is not only welcome but also imperative to properly critical IR. We hope that this chapter and the chapters engaging with it in this section can contribute productively to ongoing conversations about actors, agency, and subjects.

Notes

1. We recognize the largely Western character of these disciplines but take that modifier for granted hereafter when we refer to (contemporary) social sciences and/or to IR and IPS.
2. We are emphatically *not* arguing that these various developments are either singular—each has different variants—or coherent—the variants may be inconsistent with one another. For example, Weberian "verstehen" (Weber 1947 [1864–1920]) is a very different form of individualism than is the "atomistic" version (e.g., Hobbes 1991 [1642, 1658]). Different individualisms also disagree about fundamentals, such as whether there is a basic difference between the natural and the social sciences (Weber 1947 [1864–1920]) or not (Popper 1936; 1945: 78). We are simply arguing that these three sets of developments have contributed, differently but cumulatively, to a common sense in which individual "actors" and their "agency" are central to explanation in social science, including in IR.
3. The masculinist character of this conceptualization has long been the target of excellent feminist social and political theoretical critique (e.g. DiStefano 1983; Peterson 1992).
4. For an engaging counter-reading of Hobbes's mushroom metaphor, see Kaitlyn Camp, "Hobbes Is a Fungi" (2018).
5. This, of course, means that for most proponents of MI, Wendt's claim that "states are people too" is scientifically dubious, at best, and that all IR theories mentioned above that treat institutions as if they were individuals still require micro-foundations.
6. As Steven Lukes has pointed out, some versions of MI do not require inter-theoretic reduction (2006 [1973]: 6–7).
7. While liberal individualism assumes *intentional* actors/agents, as do choice-theoretic approaches, the micro-foundations promised by MI do not require "intention" as the prime mover of explanation. Even if micro-foundations do not descend to quantum physics, they can focus on other individual-level micro-predicates, such as behaviors or psychological states (Lukes 1968: 123–125).
8. While our purpose with this paragraph was to highlight the irony of the political nature of the "objective," value-neutral positivist project, it reveals a second irony. Our explanation here performs the very deeply ingrained individualist, "agentic" understanding of agency that we critique in its implicit assumption that an explanation becomes adequate when outcomes are attributed to the actions of concrete individual agents, like Popper, Hempel, Hayek, or von Mies, and their individual interests, beliefs, and motivations.
9. We are not arguing that all of IR now adheres to narrow neoclassical marginalist or rational choice, let alone game theoretic, assumptions. Clearly, not all actor-centered models are choice-theoretic. Rather, we are arguing that the "scientific" status accorded choice-theoretic forms of explanation have helped, yet again and in one more slightly different way, to entrench the individual "actor and their agency"—whether a rational choice-theoretic actor or not—at the center of explanation.
10. McCloskey's whole point, of course, was that the practice of economics and its positivist claims do not coincide with its actual "rhetoric" (1987) and that, far from being "objective" and "scientific", economics is based on far-reaching, consequential, and unscientific metaphors.
11. See Heath (1976) for a sustained critique of this "economic imperialism" in the social sciences.
12. Again, not all individual-level explanations require choice-theoretic assumptions. Adam Przeworski (1985), for example, offered an argument that supports both MI and micro-foundations for Marxism while rejecting rational choice-theoretic assumptions about the individual.
13. But cf. Moe (1979) for a critique of this assumption.
14. This reference to "people" does not, of course, imply that discursively constituted "subjects" are only concrete "people." While "subjects" can, of course, be human individuals, they can also be various forms of collectivities, like states, or organizations, or abstractions, or events, or, for that matter, fictions.
15. This extended example draws on Weldes (1996, 1999a, 1999b).
16. For the remarkable salience of the beard and beardedness to this subject construction, see Weldes (1999a: 98–100, 182–186).
17. These alternative constructions of the 1962 "crisis" are discussed in more detail in Weldes (1996: 292–293; 1999a: 27–37) as well as in Laffey and Weldes (2008). Other alterative narratives exist as well (e.g. Weldes 1996: 291–295).

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CHAPTER 38

POLITIES

IVER B. NEUMANN

INTRODUCTION

Where the humanities are out to catalogue and understand the entire range of human activities and how they are understood by those who perform and are affected by them, it is the job of the social sciences to categorize and generalize. Categorization and generalization will inevitably reify and homogenize certain human activities and marginalize others, which is a form of violence. There will therefore always be an analytical and ethical imperative on International Relations (IR) and other social sciences to remain as sensitive as possible to the specific social contexts that they use as raw material for categorization and generalization. The concept of polity offers itself not as a solution to the impossible but as a resource in our work, for it may serve as a general reminder that political groups vary widely with time and space and must be treated accordingly, as well as a specific antidote against the widespread state-centrism of a state-dominated period of world history. The chapter begins with a discussion of the concept, goes on to précis IR work on when, and in what degree, world-historical polities have become so-called like units, and ends with a somewhat longer discussion of the three categories of polities that are of major interest for IR today: states, empires and, residually, "nonstate" actors. A caveat is in order. Given that the goal of this text is to give an overview of usages and findings, it must touch base with a variety of usages in relevant disciplines. It will therefore vacillate somewhat between usages of concepts, and most especially of the concept "state."

POLITY THE CONCEPT

The everyday meaning of "polity" is something that has a leadership and is being led. It is derived from the late Latin *politia*, which means administration. The first recorded use in English hails from 1538. Its etymology goes back, via the Greek *politeia* (from *polis*), to a Proto-Indo-European terms for something that is defended by artificially made structures.[1] All three basic ingredients of a political unit—ruler, ruled, and claimed and cordoned off territory—are in play here. Polity is the term for a basic political unit, and that is exactly how it is used in political analysis. In light of Weldes and Duvall's

discussion of the social character of agency as the lead chapter to this part of the Handbook, one notes a fundamental ambiguity regarding the origins of all polities: contemporaneity; also, many historians often stress the importance of individuals (a Sargon, a Jinggis Khan) in forging polities (the micro level), while it is also always possible to stress structural and relational factors (the meso and macro levels). As Berthold Brecht put the key point in the poem "A Worker Reads History",

> Caesar beat the Gauls.
>
> Was there not even a cook in his army?

Temporality—how humans experience time—is, of course, of the essence here. As time goes by, individuals like Sargon, Jinggis Khan, and Caesar retain name recognition, but the overall picture is that the further back we go in our analyses, individual agency is increasingly occluded by structural factors. This must be one of the things Hegel meant when he wrote that Minerva's owl only takes wing at dusk: as the hustle and bustle of specific individual relations take their place in longer chains of interaction, patterns emerge with increasing clarity. Any field-working anthropologist will recognize how what at first seems to be a series of fairly random interactions come to look much less random as they keep repeating themselves during the field work. By the same token, most historians will come to see that what they work with is actually not one damn thing happening after the other but rather instances of fairly specific social forms. As the editors rightly stress in their introduction to this volume, it is a key job for International Political Sociology (IPS) to identify these social forms, because not only are they interesting in and of themselves but also they are preconditions for new actions.

There exists another term, "state," the quotidian and sometime academic use of which is often synonymous to that of polity. For example, some archaeologists still denote the earliest examples of stable and complex polities such as Assyria, Mesopotamia, and Egypt as "early states." There are two basic problems with this. First, in everyday and also in most academic usage, the term "state" is effortlessly used about a very particular kind of polity, the genealogy of which starts in Renaissance Italy and then spreads, first to the rest of Europe and then to most of the rest of the world. When we use the term "state" for phenomena that are not part of this genealogical sequence, we will, consciously or unconsciously, carry with us certain assumptions that may be specific to this sequence to other contexts, such as that of the second and first millennia before the common era in the Eastern Mediterranean and Anatolia, where they may not apply. The second problem with using the term "state» as a catchall is that the state that began to form in Renaissance Italy, and then spread, was increasingly able to claim sovereignty. The doctrine of sovereignty holds that a state frames out other polities that overlap with it from decision-making and subdues other polities that are nested within it so that the state is subordinate to no other units and only relates to other states on a basis of equality. This is a very specific way of thinking about inter-polity relations and one that

will not apply to other world-historical contexts. Students of IR therefore tend to reserve the concept of "state" for a modern and contemporary form of polity, the direct roots of which stretch back to the European Renaissance. There are two major risks of such usage. First, it often comes with a certain teleology riding on it, so that Italian city states and the European states that were their immediate successors become some kind of historical apogee for the rest of the world to emulate. Such a way of understanding political form rules out the hybridization that will inevitably characterize processes of diffusion. A political form such as the state will never arise in its pristine imported form in another social milieu but will always cake on features of political forms that were already there (Neumann and Wigen 2018). Second, by insisting on the historical newness of the Italian city state, one elides what may be previous political forms that may also be called states. Ancient Greek city states were not that different from the ones of the Italian Renaissance, and neither were the millennia old Neolithic and Bronze Age Mesopotamian city states. There are two ways to combat the Eurocentrism afoot here. We may either follow archaeologists and use the term "state" more widely or we may reserve the term "state" for the cluster of modern forms that now dominate the world. In any case, given that "state" is only one political form amongst many, we need another term to denote political units in general. That term is "polity."

There exists yet another term, "nation," that is often used synonymously with state or even polity, as in "international relations," the United Nations, the family of nations, etc. This usage is particularly widespread in the United States, where it serves to separate the units of the American federation, which are called states (Michigan, California), from other sovereign entities outside of the United States (Mexico, Canada). As with state, however, "nation" has come to take on a very specific meaning, that of a group of people who claim common descent and have aspiration either to secede and form a new and separate state or an autonomous administrative unit inside a state (which then may, or may not, serve as a base for subsequent secession). This specific meaning makes the term unfit for general analytical use. Again, "polity" is the obvious alternative.

In IR, the use of the term "polity" has become increasingly widespread after Yale Ferguson and Richard Mansbach published their book *Polities: Authority, Identities and Change* in 1996. This book has been a touchstone for studies of polities, for two reasons. Its conceptualization of polities as groups that have we-ness, a capacity to mobilize resources, and a degree of institutionalization and hierarchy remains the standard definition (Ferguson and Mansbach 1996: 34). This definition also points to the many-splendored character of group agency (as distinct from individual agency). Polities are dependent on all the three qualities of group agency noted by Ferguson and Mansbach to arise and also to maintain themselves. As both a polity's internal composition and its environment inevitably change over time, a polity cannot stand still for its picture but will have to adjust both the three qualities of group agency as such, as well as the relations between them, in order to sustain itself. The literatures on how states perform sovereignty and how the boundary between states and their societies change are relevant

here (Mitchell 1988; Neumann and Sending 2021). An agenda also opens up for comparing the group agency of different types of polities, as well as the group agency of different units within the same category, such as states (Tilly 2008). The second reason why Ferguson and Mansbach's book remains a touchstone is that its nutshell discussions of types of polities in different world-historical periods remains an excellent point of departure for more empirically rich studies.

Note that defining polities as groups that have we-ness, a capacity to mobilize resources, and a degree of institutionalization and hierarchy, and assume that these properties must be there in a certain quantity, means that there will exist groups that are of interest to IR that are not polities. Groups of migrant workers that meet to dance in public parks, motorcycle clubs, families, or professional bankers' associations may or may not count as polities: it is a question of how high they score regarding Ferguson and Mansbach's three criteria. Historically, we have a very interesting example of a unit that scored extremely high on we-feeling but very low on institutions and stable hierarchy. This is the hunter-gatherer band, a nomadic or semi-nomadic group of people that typically contains 20–200 people and is differentiated by age, gender, and religious specialization only (Lee and DeVore 1968; Buzan and Little 2000: 115–133; Marlowe 2005; Donnelly 2012a). Until around 11,000 years ago, this was the ubiquitous and sole form of political human units. It is of interest to students of IR for its dominance of the historical record, for its lingering presence, and for its forging of embryonic relations and forms of institutions such as annual or seasonal gatherings, rituals, and gift-giving. As Buzan and Little (2000: 129; see also Donnelly 2012b) put it,

> Although bands must generally have interacted on a bilateral basis, there is also evidence that they could aggregate into larger groups on special occasions. … Such gatherings provided opportunities for group rituals, mate findings, information sharing, and gift-giving. But the process of aggregation could only occur in locations where there was a superabundence of food, and a macroband—an aggregation of HGBs [hunter-gatherer bands]—could only stay together for so long as the food lasted.

An even broader term than polity, then, is political unit, with a unit being a plurality of agents, and politics being the conflicts over who gets what, when, and how that make us who we are. A rudimentary semantic tree of polity would look like the following:

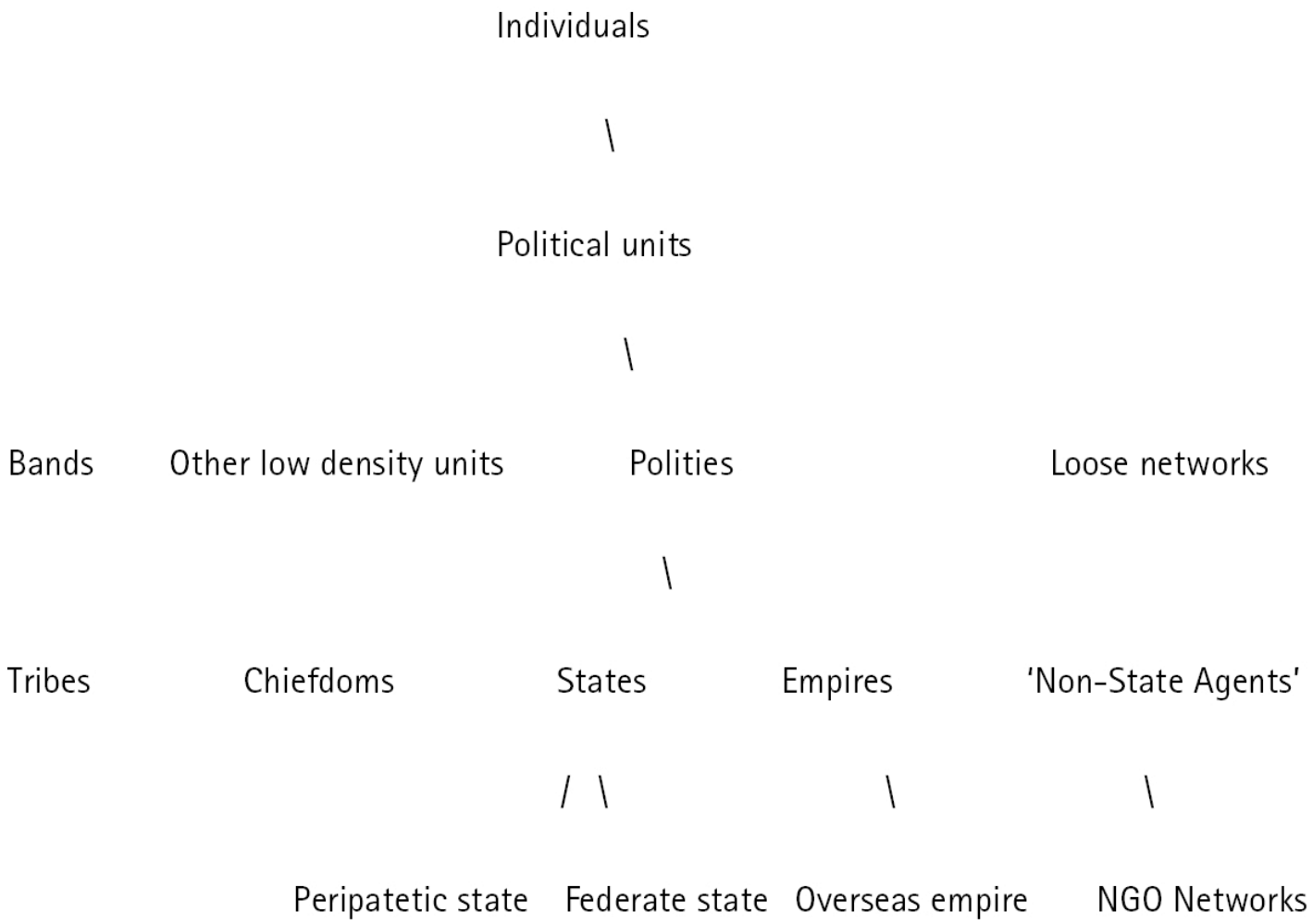

FIGURE 38.1 Rudimentary semantic tree for the concept of polity

The choice of examples of polity types in the bottom line of Figure 38.1 is informed by two factors: evolutionary theory and world history. In 1962, neo-evolutionist Elman Service first published his classificatory scheme of political evolution in four stages: band, tribe, chiefdom, and state (for the mature formulation, see Service 1975; for an overview of critiques and alternatives, see Marcus and Feinman 1998: 4–10). Johnson and Earle (1987) nuanced Service's set-up by talking instead of family-level groups, local groups (ranging from acephalous groups to Big Man collectivities) and regional polities (ranging from chiefdoms to states).[2] Graeber and Wengrow (2021) nuanced it further by demonstrating how specific polities may oscillate between different categories, usually on a seasonal basis.[3] All these terms need elaboration.

Tribes have hierarchies; they are led by so-called great men or big men, but we are talking about fairly tenuous and nonhereditary leadership (Sahlins 1963; Godelier 1986; Mann 1986: 68).[4] Note that the concept of tribe has fallen in disrepute with anthropologists, who now tend to use "ethnic group" instead. Archaeologists who work with historical material need a more clearly delineated term and still tend to use "tribe."

Scott (2009: 257) argues that tribes should be understood as polities that resist inclusion into a state:

> States and empires have been founded by peoples conventionally understood as tribes—Jinggis Khan, Charlemagne, Osman, the Manchu. And yet, it would be far more correct to say that states make tribes, than to say tribes make states. Tribes are what have been called a "secondary form," created in two ways and only in the context of a state or empire. The antonym or binary to "tribe" is "peasantry." The difference, of course, is that the peasant is a cultivator already incorporated fully as a subject of the state. Tribes or tribals, on the other hand, are those peripheral subjects not (yet?) brought fully under state rule and/or those who have chosen to avoid the state.

Chiefdoms display an even more hierarchical structure than do tribes: they have regularized redistribution, and are defined by Earle (1997) as autonomous, centralized, and hierarchized political units held together by a land-owning leader. The emergence of chiefdoms is often made possible by access to high-status items that allow entry to trade networks that may bring other prestige goods, such as metal, gems, salt. Leadership tends to be hereditary. Chiefdoms are states writ small: they are smaller in size, they have more limited action capacity, and they tend to engage in competitions that reduce their number and result in state formation as an unintended outcome (Elias 1939; Savage 1997). Social anthropologists, archaeologists, and evolutionary theorists have produced sizeable literatures on these processes, which are there for students of IPS to draw on. Arguably, IR will have to do so in order not to end up as a rather limited, presentist concern.

IR on world historical polities: Like units or diversity?

IR scholarship on world history has thrown up two key points: Polities emerge as pluralities, and the polities of a plurality eventually converge by becoming more alike and sometimes by agglomerating altogether. This first point is largely accepted across the board in IR (the exception is Wendt [e.g. 1999], whose stressing of pristine emergence is not as isolated within the wider academic field as it has become in IR). These pluralities form systems that exert homogenizing pressure on the units of which they consist. As I will now go on to demonstrate, it remains hotly debated how to think of the constitutive relationship between agent and structure here, as well as in what degree, and within which exact areas of validity, this happens. As exemplified by Weldes and Du vall's chapter (this volume), one may also question the fruitfulness of framing polity emergence in terms of agency–structure dynamics altogether and rather ask how concrete relations spawn both agency and structures in the first place.

If all the different kinds of polities discussed so far emerge in pluralities, and given that IR specializes in relations between polities, it follows that our discipline should be particularly well placed to deal with their emergence (Ruggie 1995; Osiander 1994; Spr uyt 1996; Waever 1996; Reus-Smit 1999; Teschke 1998; Krasner 1999; Bayart 1989; Rin gmar 2012; Datta-Ray 2015; Phillips and Sharman 2015; Neumann and Wigen 2018, Zar

akol 2022). Following Waltz (1979), it remains customary within IR to depart from the notion that systems interaction will lead to a convergence of unit type. Systems will either be hierarchical, which spells two polity types (empires, with subaltern colonies nested within them) or anarchical, where the self-help nature of the system will ensure that, in order not to go out of business, all polities eventually become like units (Spruyt 1996). The present IR debate about this converges on Phillips and Sharman's (2015) thesis of "durable diversity," which postulates that, where the modern state system is concerned, this process may take centuries. Phillips and Sharman do not, however, question the basic thesis that there will eventually be convergence.

This may be contrasted with Buzan and Little's world-historical take on the issue. Their charge is that "the problem with IR theory is that it has treated the international system as standing outside history and has then used history to reinforce this ahistorical assumption" (2000: 10, 160; see also Buzan 2023). In order to rectify this, they take the existence and complexity of a system between political units as their point of departure and operate with a tripartite periodization of world history. Referring to Bar-Yozef (1998), they postulate the emergence of long-range contacts between hunter-gatherer bands around 40,000 years ago. The two subsequent breaks are conventional: about 3,500 bce with the emergence of the city states of Sumer, and around 1500 ce with the emergence of the early modern state. They then argue that the like unit-thesis holds for hunter-gatherer bands (see also Donnelly 2012a), as well as for the modern state system, but not for the period in between. From this they draw the conclusion that, while like units (bands) held sway during the hunter-gatherer period and also for the modern state system, it did not hold for the period in between. From this, they draw the conclusion (Buzan and Little 2000: 7) that

> it is change in the structure of the dominant units, not the move from hierarchy to anarchy, that represents the most fundamental, era-defining type of transformation in international systems.

Empirically, for the period 3,500 BCE–1500 AD, this means that the key factor is the emergence of two new types of polity: city state and empire. It has already been noted how infighting between chiefdoms often have states as the unintended outcome (compare Weldes and Duvall's discussion of productive power, this volume). The same goes for city states and empires. Note, however, that the reverse also often holds true, as expanding empires often spawn new, nested city-state satrapies.

Mention should also be made of Neumann and Glørstad's work (2022), which investigates a period that was left unexplored by Waltz, Buzan, and Little as well as Phillips and Sharman, namely the roughly six millennia from the emergence of units that were not hunter-gatherer bands but settled communities, and until the beginning of the Bronze Age. They find that this period is increasingly dominated by a like-unit situation. Current IR world-historical debates about systems dynamics may be summed up in Table 38.1.

Table 38.1 IR world-historical takes on systems dynamics

	Primary factor	Time period investigated	Postulate	Anarchy—> Like units
Waltz	System over units	1500 ad–		Yes
				Yes
Buzan and Little	Units over system	40,000–3,500 bce		Yes
		3,500 bce–1,500 ad	Full diversity	No
		1,500 ad–	Like units	Yes
Phillips and Sharman	Units over system	1,500 ad–	Durable diversity	No
Neumann and Glørstad	System over units	9,000 bce–2,500 bce	Durable diversity	No

The remainder of this chapter will discuss the last three types of polity listed in the penultimate line of Figure 38.1: states, empires, and nonstate agents.

States

States emerged first as city states (Yoffee 2015). The literature on the Amarna system that emerged with the rise of Bronze Age kingdoms in the Eastern Mediterranean and Anatolia (ca. 2,700–1,200 BCE: Wight 1977; Ferguson and Mansbach 1996; Cohen and Westbrook 2000; Liverani 2001) typically refers to the system's units as states. Elman Service's evolutionary understanding of a state as a sedentary unit with a centralized power structure based on ownership to land and redistribution of resources flows from his evolutionary scheme band –> tribe –> chiefdom –> state and remains fairly representative of archaeologist usage. Such an understanding would highlight the emergence of the Sumeran "city states" in Mesopotamia in the latter half of the fourth millennium BCE as a first. However, within the social sciences, it remains customary to date the emergence of the state as Italian fifteenth-century city states, and their neighbors made a jump in complexity and became early modern European states. Eight centuries of ever more effective taxation, regulation of the use of violence within the state, and monopolization of formal relations with other political entities, complete with increases in the administrative capacity to do all this crystallized into a quantitatively and qualitatively more differentiated type of polity.

Writing in the early nineteenth century, G. F. H. Hegel singled out the state as nothing less than the motor of world history. This view still grounds all modern thinking on the state, be that as a foundation or as a target of critique (for a discussion of the legal aspects of this influence, and especially the effects of categorizing different polities into an evolutionary sequence progressing from civilized –> barbarian –> savage). His influence makes itself felt in anthropologist Henry Lewis Morgan's book *Ancient Society* (1877), which was, in turn, the direct influence on Friedrich Engels's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884). In that book, Marx's key collaborator, Friedrich Engels, synthesized Morgan's reflections on settlement and property with Marx's analyses of capital accumulation. For Engels and Morgan, the thing to note is that

the world was once peopled by nomads, organized in person-based political structures, only to be replaced by settled populations that adopt the state as the principle of political organization. In this sense, the term "state" is reserved for settled populations. Where the young Marx had stressed how the state mediated between different class interests, the older Marx tended to see the states as an executive committee for the bourgeoisie of his day. While Marx's work has spawned a wide array of work on state building outside IR, within IR, Marx has primarily been the paragon of an important group of International Political Economy scholars. World systems work in the Wallersteinian tradition has focused mainly on trade. In IR, it has served as a nice whipping boy for work that has been geared more toward the importance of war and cultural factors.

Emile Durkheim's thinking about the state was also clearly Hegelian. Durkheim's point of departure is how rulers extract from and lay down the law for the ruled, but contrary to Engels, he sees this as an inevitable and obvious process. Every society is, by necessity, despotic at its base. For Durkheim, the state first incorporates itself as a small cadre, organized independently of society: "the State is nothing if it is not an organ distinct from the rest of society. If the State is everywhere, it is nowhere. The State comes into existence by a process of concentration that detaches a certain group of individuals from the collective mass" (Durkheim 1913: 91). When the state is young, it has interfaces with society, but the more it grows, the more those interfaces multiply: the state becomes enmeshed with society. To Durkheim, as a result, the state becomes more and more democratic. As pointed out not least by subsequent French theorists of the state, most importantly by Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu, this view of the state is too sanguine, both regarding class (a Marxian critique), ethnicity (a post-colonial critique), and gender (a feminist critique).

Max Weber is famous for his thesis from the essay "Politics as a Vocation" (1994) that monopoly on the use of force is the key factor in state building. A penchant to this thesis exists in the work of economic theorist Max Schumpeter's work, where the state is seen as the institution that has a monopoly on claiming taxes. Subsequent Weberians, most notably Charles Tilly, have noted the direct connection between the two (so did Tacitus two millennia ago, when he pointed out that kingly gifts had to be bankrolled by war) and have continued bellicist theorizing about the rise of the state.

Within IR, there is also a literature on the kinds of polities that Louis Althusser called state apparatuses, particularly on territorial chunks of states such as cities, municipalities, counties, and regions (Cornago 2006; Adler-Nissen and Gad 2013) or functionally defined agents such as tourism boards, export councils, and sovereign wealth funds. Graham Allison's 1971 book *Essence of Decision*, where he analyzes how the US President's office, the State Department, the Pentagon, the Air Force, and so forth all tried to present the Cuba crisis from their own perspective and prescribe measures out of their own toolboxes, remains a paragon of a growing number of studies that demonstrate how substate polities matter to IR. These studies may also be read as

studies of how group agency is the outcome of struggles between different parts of the group.

Empires

Empires are arguably the most important form of polity in written history. Where states are supposed to be sovereign and relatively homogeneous political units, empires are conglomerates of a center and peripheries, where the peripheries are subordinate to the suzerain center and have different kinds of relationships to that center (Tilly 1992; Nexon and Wright 2007). The middlemen who run a certain periphery have a unique relationship to the center. This is what Tilly calls heterogeneous contracting. We are on the level of ideal types here. The reality of, say, the relationship of each Land (federal subject) in Germany or each state in the United States to the center is different from that of any other Land or state, but ideally these relations are supposed to be the same—the state, even a federal state where laws vary somewhat among its constitutive parts, is supposed to be a homogenous political space. Empires are not.

Note the ambiguity of so-called modern European states: they tend to go from having an imperial to having a state structure in Europe, but concurrently, they tend to be cores of empires in a global context. For example, by the end of the nineteenth century, France, understood as the hexagonally shaped territory in the European heartland, was a nation-state, but France, understood as the global polity centered on Paris and the hexagon, was an empire.

Beginning with the Akkadian empire that formed under Sargon (rule circa 2334–2279 bce) out of Sumerian city states, empires usually claim a divine mandate, with the emperor being God's vicar (the Byzantine and Roman version) or shadow (the Ottoman version) on earth. Similar ideas may be found in China and pre-contact Latin America. Charlemagne attempted to construct an empire to succeed Rome, and as part of this undertaking, he allowed himself to be crowned imperator Augustus on Christmas Day in 800. In the West European Middle Ages, the concept of empire was also, and specifically, a resource that the powers that be would wield against the Catholic Church. Empire stood against sacerdotium, the heaven-ordained power of the hierarchy of clergy. These two concepts were so-called fighting concepts, that is concepts that both tried to lay claim to the same area of social life. From 1254, the empire in question was known as the Holy Roman Empire and, from 1512, as the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The Holy Roman Empire was the polity from which the so-called Westphalian states tore themselves away. It hung on to existence until 1806, when Napoleon, who wanted an empire of his own, abolished it.

Parallel to this development, we have the so-called European age of discovery. From the 1340s onward, Portuguese sailors arrived in West Africa. In 1492, Christopher Columbus set out from Europe to India, going west. The Spanish Empire that eventually

emerged would reach from Latin America to the Philippines. It would sometimes take a letter two years to reach from one part of the empire to another. In Latin America, there were already large-scale indigenous polities based on agriculture in place, with the Inca Empire being the best known. The 150-year-long period from the Napoleonic Wars to decolonization in the 1960s is often referred to as the "age of imperialism."

During the "age of imperialism" and to this day, the polities of an empire outside the core and semi-core (Andersen 2016) were known as colonies. Before the Enlightenment, "colony" meant something like that which had been split off from a mother unit. The colonies of ancient Greece, for example, were new and independent *poleis* that did not have that much contact with the mother polis, but they honored the memory of where they came from (Neumann 2018).

In the 1840s, Richard Cobden, argued that imperialism was nothing but a huge outdoor relief program for the upper classes. Instead of the imperialism of the aristocracy, Cobden wanted the bourgeoisie to take over. Free trade should be the organizational principle of IR so that there would be as little contact between states as possible and, instead, as much contact between peoples—read traders—as world infrastructure could possibly hold. In the early twentieth century, economist and social philosopher Joseph Schumpeter formulated a fully fledged theory of imperialism along Cobdenite lines. He argued that, in an increasingly bourgeois European world that saw less and less room for the old aristocratic specialty of the use of force, the aristocracy had to turn outward to find places where they could apply it. Hence, imperialism should be understood as an atavistic by-product of European economic development. The major conceptual development of the late nineteenth century we find in Germany, where social democrats used "imperialism" to denote the expansion of other European powers. Germany set in train a movement that would eventually make it impossible to use "imperialism" as a positive term used about one's own group. "Imperialist" became a negatively loaded concept used about others. Vladimir I. Lenin drew on liberal and socialist thinkers to argue that imperialism was simply the culmination of capitalism. Capitalism, Lenin argued, had to expand to survive. Capitalist states could not cooperate with one another beyond sharing spoils, for what drove capitalist states was capitalist class interest, and capitalists were a national class. When the correlation of forces between different capitalist states changed, the capitalists in the rising state would demand more resources. As long as capitalists had the option to expand globally, this struggle could be solved by the rising state grabbing new land and new labor somewhere overseas. However, now that capitalism had expanded to envelop the whole world and there was nothing left to carve up, Lenin argued, the result was inevitable: a global war. Lenin published his pamphlet *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* in 1917, as the First World War was raging, and offered his theory of imperialism as an explanation of the Great War (rising Germany could not be accommodated by the other capitalist great powers in its wish for "a place in the sun"—that is, an overseas empire—so war broke out). What would come after the highest stage of capitalism was, of course, communism, and under

communism, there would be no imperialism, for imperialism was a capitalist phenomenon that would go to its grave together with capitalism. Communist states would be animated by the class interest of workers, and workers were an international class with internationalist class interests. The coming of communism would therefore also mark the end of war. However, Lenin was wrong on both these counts. Imperialism antedates capitalism, and it survived communism. The polity that Lenin helped found, the Soviet Union, may also be understood as an empire.

Since Galtung (1971; see also Motyl 1999) suggested a wheel model of empires with a hub at the center and spokes to colonial administrative sites and Doyle (1986) and Watson (1992) published their general books on empires, IR work on empires has exploded.[5] Specific contributions include a geopolitically oriented interest in differences between sea-based and land-based empires and work on the world historical unexceptional character of the Western empires that dominated globally between 1800 and 1950 (Sharman 2019).

"Nonstate actors"

The fact that we often talk about polities other than states (and empires) as "nonstate" makes them residual to states. In light of world history, such usage is not warranted. One type of polity with a claim to being transhistorical (for the period when we have had polities) is kin. Empires in the Eurasian steppe—so-called marching empires or steppe empires—had a kinship polity at its core. After the advent of Jinggis Khan, Mongols called it "the Golden Kin." Politics in mediaeval Europe was a game of thrones played by kinship groups. Thus, it is difficult to understand politics in mediaeval Europe without the concept of kinship, just as it is impossible to understand, say, contemporary Chinese politics without realizing that the Long March of the Communist Party spawned party cadres whose sons are now at the heart of the Chinese regime. Kinship groups—typically networks congealing around a core of blood relatives headed by a senior male and consisting of adopted members, in-laws (so-called affines), and hangers-on—are definitely polities, as are parties (Haugevik and Neumann 2018). As the examples demonstrate, however, such polities are, in the contemporary world, nested within one or more states.

International organizations (IOs) are treated in the chapter by Christian and Schindler in this volume. Suffice it to say here that they have states as members and have predecessors in so-called congresses. These were the coming together of states, such as the Congress of Westphalia (1648), the Congress of Vienna (1815), the Congress of Europe (formally 1815–1822) and the Congress of Paris (1919). The Congress of Vienna spawned the first example of an IO. This was the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine (1815). The second half of the nineteenth century saw the foundation of the International Telegraph Union (originally Convention, 1865), and the Universal Postal

Union (1874). The League of Nations (1919–1945) and its successor, the United Nations, may be understood as poly-IOs. David Mitrany (1888–1975), a British IR scholar of Hungarian descent, saw the emergence of these functional (that is, task-fulfilling) organizations as a harbinger of a new world order. He postulated that, as the volume of global tasks or functions grew, and grew rapidly, IOs would take over so many state functions that the state would become obsolete, and we would get a world order based on IOs. That has not happened, but, since the Second World War, the number of IOs has grown at an astonishing pace and brought a lot of previously erratic and episodic patterns of international interaction into an orderly and more predictable form. In addition to being arenas where the agency of their state members clash, IOs must also be seen as having a certain agency of their own. Agency is a layered phenomenon.

In the 1970s, the debate about the so-called seven sisters was particularly intense. These were oil companies—five American and two British—that dominated the world's energy trade. They were so-called transnational corporations (TNCs), a sub-group of transnational organizations. In what degree should they be considered extensions of the states that harbored their headquarters, and to which extent were they more fruitfully seen as independent agents? Power realists opted for seeing them the former way, while globalists argued for the latter. The issue has become even more intractable since the 1970s. Transnational organizations may fruitfully be ordered on a scale from heavily state dependent (e.g. directly controlled state firms), via degrees of independence, to independent. Note, however, that the state issue always crops up—given that the Vatican is located within the Italian capital of Rome, it may well be argued that the Catholic Church is dependent on Italy even after its formal independence agreement with Mussolini from 1922. Note also that, in times of war, even the most liberal-minded state does not hesitate to nationalize—that is, make part of the state—seemingly independent firms and organizations that it sees as crucial to the war effort.

A number of transnational organizations prefer to be known as nongovernmental organizations—NGOs. This is particularly so for so-called ideal organizations, which are typically nonprofit, Western organizations set up to champion some cause. Ideal transnational organizations—Amnesty International would be a typical example—tend to start as NGOs in one country and then spread (Hopgood 2006). Amnesty is organized so that it mirrors the state and the states system. Only its headquarters in London can deal with the United Nations and other IOs. National chapters deal with states within which they are based, and local chapters deal with the local authorities of that state, which is to say that Amnesty International is isomorphic to state-centered world order.

SUMMING UP

Given that IR's remit in the division of labor between the social sciences is to look at the social and political relations and interstices between different kinds of groups, it stands

to reason that polities—what they are, how they come about, and how they change—has been a key site of work. As should be clear by now, extant work has focused on Europe and Europe's colonial relations with the rest of Europe from the Renaissance onwards. There are vibrant discussions in the field regarding polities in world history. Works discussing relations between European and other polities in a noncolonial context have begun to emerge. The most pressing lacunae in the IR literature are works that follow the likes of Tambiah (1973) and Geertz (1980) in theorizing non-European classes of polities, and work on historical relations between different kinds of non-European polities.

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Notes

1. Cf. Sanskrit *pur*, fortress (see Merriam-Webster Dictionary n.d.
2. Renfrew (1974) distinguishes between chiefdoms that are "group-oriented" (meaning that there is evidence of collective work such as megaliths and little evidence of individuation such as prestige graves), on the one hand, and "individualizing" chiefdoms, on the other.
3. However, their claim that this should blow up the categorization scheme as such is overblown, for in discussing the oscillation, they themselves actually lean heavily on it.
4. The great man is a champion, a war leader who gains respect but is not able to convert respect into economic advantage, and so cannot engage in redistribution to shore up his position. By contrast, big men are war- *and* peace-time leaders who organize feasts, lead warriors, engage in oratory and ritual leadership, and so exert leadership in a wider and more institutionalized manner.
5. Watson postulated a pendulum between periods dominated by empires, on the one hand, and periods dominated by systems of city states or states on the other. While this work has proved inspirational (see e.g. the discussion of Buzan and Little on city states and empires above), the hypothesis is too mechanical to take us very far.

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CHAPTER 39

THE SOCIAL CONSTITUTION OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS ACTORS OF WORLD POLITICS

BEN CHRISTIAN AND SEBASTIAN SCHINDLER

Introduction

Like other Western social sciences, International Relations (IR) is marked by a general tendency to assume the existence of agents as a given and focus predominantly on analyzing what they do (cf. Weldes and Duvall, this volume; Braun, Schindler, and Wille 2019). Despite this tendency, however, international organizations (IOs) have traditionally not been viewed as agents in their own right. Instead, they have most often been conceived as structures through which others act—and specifically, as forums that are crucial to enabling interstate cooperation. This is the role they play in the rationalist institutionalist answer to the neo-realist assumption that durable, institutionalized cooperation under anarchic conditions is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve.[1] In the rationalist institutionalist view, IOs provide information and reduce transaction actions. In brief, on this view IOs are nothing other than facilitating structures for states' rational choices. This indicates that there is a twofold problem with rationalist theories: They overemphasize the agency of one kind of actor (i.e. states) while simultaneously denying the agency of others (i.e. IOs). While light is cast on the agency of the former, the agency of the latter remains in untheorized darkness.

The constructivist criticism of the rationalist institutionalist view was therefore not directed against the uncritical assumption of IO agency but against the disregard for the independent role that IOs play in world politics. In the sociologically inspired, constructivist view of IOs that countered rationalist assumptions in the late 1990s and early 2000s, IOs were characterized as actors in their own right (Finnemore 1996; Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 2004). The task for constructivists was to throw light on a category of actors whose agency stood in the shadow cast by the rationalist overemphasis on state agency. However, the way in which constructivists achieved this was not by means of a mere assumption of agency; this would have reproduced the twofold problem in the opposite sense, this time leading to an overemphasis on IO agency. Instead, the critical task for emerging International Political Sociology (IPS)

work in IR was to show that IOs do possess independent agency but that this agency depends on specific social conditions and is constituted by specific social factors. The work on this agenda, which constitutes the core of an IPS view of IOs, has provided a differentiated understanding of the social sources of IO agency. For purposes of analytical clarity, and following the conceptualization provided by Weldes and Duvall in this Handbook's lead essay on actors and agency, these sources can be located on three levels: IO agency is socially produced by (macro-level) modern rationalistic, technocratic discourse that endows IOs with rational-legal authority; by (meso-level) social relations of IOs to other actors (whose agency is, in turn, constituted through their relations to IOs); and, more radically, by (micro-level) practices in which agency is at stake and "up for grabs" at any moment.

A social view of their agency is at the heart of an IPS agenda for studying IOs, as we will reconstruct it in this chapter. We will describe how several key contributions within IPS navigate the problem of giving a place to independent IO agency without overemphasizing their independence. Work in IPS has rejected both the idea that IOs are mere structures (as rationalists in IR have traditionally seen them) and the idea that they are entirely independent, rationally calculating actors. To paraphrase Marx (2007 [1852]: 9), IOs do possess agency but not under conditions of their own choosing (cf. Barnett and Coleman 2005: 594). In the following sections, we will discuss how studies in IPS have addressed this problem from macro-, meso-, and micro-level perspectives, elaborating specific social conditions and sources of IO agency. We conclude the chapter with a reflection on the perennial problem that a grasp of the agency of some leads to the neglect of the agency of others—a problem that cannot be solved once and for all, but critical awareness of it is crucial if IPS is to continue its vibrant contribution to IO studies.

The macro-level constitution of IOs through discourse

The limited rationalist view of the role of IOs has been questioned by the work of constructivists in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It is somewhat ironic that, while rationalists generally view the social as being inhabited by existing actors, it was constructivists who criticized them for overlooking an important independent actor of world politics (Finnemore 1996; Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 2004). However, in making this critical move, constructivists relied from the outset on a social rather than a rational understanding of agency. When rational institutionalists conceive the agency of states, they tend to assume this agency analytically, viewing states as "black boxes" with certain given preferences (security, economic interests, etc.). When constructivists conceptualize the agency of IOs, they do not assume this agency but enquire into its social constitution. IO agency emerges through broader social discourses that lend it a specific social form. The production and reproduction of IOs as agents of world

politics depend on how this discourse is actualized in social practice. Two closely related moves exemplify this agenda: the first focuses on how modern bureaucratic discourse endows IOs with a specific kind of agency; the second examines the historical origins of this (technocratic) discourse.

Bureaucracies

IOs are socially constituted as bureaucracies. Their agency is shaped by this specific, modern form of organization. The implications of this basic theoretical insight for IO agency are examined in a foundational work for IPS studies of IOs, Barnett and Finnemore's book *Rules for the World* (2004). Building on a co-authored article in the journal *International Organization* (1999) and on respective individual work (e.g. Finnemore 1996; Barnett 2002), Barnett and Finnemore (2004) develop a distinctive theoretical understanding of IO agency. IOs are a distinct kind of actor with a specific social form, specific routines, and specific sources of authority. Their nature as a certain type of social agent can be usefully grasped with reference to Max Weber's account of modern authority as rational-legal. IOs draw their legitimacy and authority, and ultimately their power, from their claim to be rational problem solvers charged by states and mandated by legal rules. This claim endows IOs with specific types of authority: expert authority drawn from the claim to possess the rational knowledge needed to solve problems, delegated authority drawn from the claim to be legally authorized by states, and moral authority drawn from the claim to represent the international community rather than just specific parochial interests. In Barnett and Finnemore's view, IOs are socially constituted and empowered as actors through a much larger modern discourse of rational administration that pervades the whole modern age.

Barnett and Finnemore leave little doubt that this discourse should not be taken at face value in its entirety. To an important degree, this discourse is a rationalized myth or modern ideology. It makes what is, in reality, politically contested appear to be rational and unpolitical (cf. Ferguson 1990; Louis and Maertens 2021). As Barnett and Finnemore detail in three specific case studies, the rational-legal sources of authority that empower IOs create fundamental pathologies. Often enough, in the quest to protect one aspect of authority, or simply to ensure their institutional survival, IOs violate the very mandates that entitle them (Barnett and Finnemore 2004: chs 3–5). *Rules for the World* is not only a critical study of the social sources of authority but also (and predominantly) a critical study of authority in use. It shows in empirical detail how IOs use their claims to authority as tools to change and alter the social world, at times with profoundly pathological consequences that contradict the high values that legitimize them. In sum, the book answers the two seminal questions posed by critical theories about ideologies (cf. Horkheimer 1982 [1937]; Jahn 2021): what are their *sources* and what are their *uses*? In this sense, constructivist studies of IOs combine critical theory

with sociological study (cf. Goddard, Lawson, and Sending, this volume). Doing IPS is a critical enterprise.

With regard to macro-level bureaucratic discourse, therefore, IOs by no means play a passive role. Rather, they actively refer to this discourse in order to justify their (sometimes pathological) behavior and, more generally, to gain legitimacy and authority: 'IOs work hard to preserve this appearance of neutrality and service to others' (Barnett and Finnemore 2004: 21). Particularly in the course of the growing politicization of IOs in recent decades (cf. Zürn 2018), IOs have become increasingly dependent on legitimation strategies to justify themselves vis-à-vis their stakeholders (cf. Zaum 2013; Gronau and Schmidtke 2016; Tallberg and Zürn 2019). These social processes of self-legitimation involve legitimizing narratives (e.g. "for the people," cf. Dingwerth et al. 2019), but also specific practices (e.g. "opening up," cf. Tallberg et al. 2013). Research on IO legitimation thus shows that the discourse of rational administration alone does not automatically endow IOs with agency. Legitimacy is not a given; it is always dependent on the acceptance of, and interaction with, third parties. This already indicates that the social constitution of IO agency also depends on the specific relations between the IO and other actors in the field (see the section below on "The Meso-Level Constitution of IOs through Relations").

Rules for the World is widely credited as a door opener for sociological enquiries into IOs in IR (cf. Neumann and Sending 2010). Indeed, a whole set of studies on IOs has built on their approach, either by refining it (e.g. Weaver 2008) or by criticizing its limitations, throwing light on different social sources and levels of social constitution (e.g. Sending 2015; see the following section). However, before discussing how meso- and micro-level analyses have refined the understanding of the social sources of IO agency in IPS, it is useful to introduce another sense in which the macro-level constitution of IOs can be examined—namely through the history of ideas.

Technocracies

The research discussed thus far largely takes the social form of bureaucratic IO agency for granted and asks how this form shapes IO practice. However, the social discourse that constitutes IOs as a specific type of world political actor is by no means stable. Rather, it has specific, contingent historical origins. Both academics and practitioners have contributed to shaping the macro-level discourse that constitutes IOs as social actors. For example, in a recent genealogical examination of the tradition of "technocractic internationalism," Steffek (2021) traces this discourse back to nineteenth-century advocates of social planning. Steffek shows that, far from being unitary, modern rational administrative discourse has undergone many changes over the centuries, which can be divided into specific phases. Criticism of technocracy has been a fundamental part of the development of the technocratic tradition. Interestingly, the critics did often not reject technocracy in its entirety but subscribed to it in part

themselves. For instance, Hans Morgenthau, known for his fervent criticism of the rationality of "scientific man [*sic*]," appreciated the potential of an approach of small steps, which he saw embodied in Mitrany's functionalism (Steffek 2021: 114–124).

An understanding of the technocratic tradition, as provided by Steffek, shows that the macro-level social constitution of IOs is not unitary over time but is shaped by concrete, often contested ideas. IOs were not born as one (rational-legal) type of actor. Instead, their claim to technocratic authority evolved in conjunction with a theoretical discourse that is central to IR as a discipline, involving figures like Ernst Haas, Leonard Woolf, Arthur Salter, Albert Thomas, Giuseppe De Michelis, and Henri de Saint-Simon. Theory and practice, the academy and the organizations, were not rigidly separated. Instead, there were "trading zones" traversed by personalities such as Robert Cox, an IO officer who became a leading critical IR intellectual (Holthaus and Steffek 2020). The authority of IOs, which Barnett and Finnemore elucidate on a conceptual level, has concrete intellectual origins. It is socially constituted through a discursive tradition marked by continuity and change.

The meso-level constitution of IOs through relations

IO agency is socially constituted through not only abstract discourse but also concrete social relations with other actors such as states, other IOs, civil society actors, etc. As much as IO agency acquires a specific social form through discourse, which endows IOs with specific (in)capacities to act, as much does this occur also through these relations. In what follows, we distinguish between two forms of social constitution of IO agency at the meso level, each of which conceives of the social environment of IOs in a specific, distinct way—namely, as social fields or as professional networks. Although both "fields" and "networks" are concerned with the constitutive effects of interactions between constellations of actors, the two approaches differ in their focus. While a perspective on "fields" sheds light on how IOs navigate within a fluid social structure and how their *relations to other actors* undergo change as a result of interactions, research on "professional networks" concentrates on the *diffusion of ideas* resulting from interactions between experts across different IOs, with IO agency as an emergent effect of this diffusion.

Social fields

IO agency is constituted by the social field in which the organization is embedded. The IO's position relative to others in this field influences its relationship with its immediate environment: depending on the position it occupies, other actors (whether states, fellow IOs, or nongovernmental organizations, NGOs) can be either friends or foes, allies or competitors. However, it is important to note that the IO's position in the

field does not determine its agency. In contrast to rationalist approaches that understand IO behavior as merely a calculated *reaction* to a given environment and resource distribution (see e.g. Abbott et al. 2016),[2] an IPS perspective on IO agency is characterized by its focus on how the field is socially constituted through structures of meaning. The structure of the social field in which IOs are embedded is not determined by the distribution of material and social resources, neither are the relations between the various players. Work in IPS is not about establishing once and for all "who stands where" but rather about finding out "how" actors come to end up where they stand, with which consequences for their agency. How—that is, by means of which social resources or discursive moves—does the IO become a competitor in this case and a collaborative partner in another case? How do the actors in the field distinguish themselves socially from one another? How do IOs claim a specific position or role for themselves? By asking such questions, a field approach illuminates the fluidity and contestedness of the social field and the interactive processes that help IOs become agents.

Sending's book *The Politics of Expertise* (2015) is an example of such a relational perspective that looks at the competition between actors in a social field. Starting from the observation that macro-level analyses that only look at the attributes of IOs cannot explain how IOs *acquire* authority, Sending shows that "authority is established through ongoing competition between a broader set of actors" (2015: 3; see also Hofferberth 2019). Drawing on the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu and using its concept of the "field," his analysis focuses explicitly on the dynamics through which authority is acquired (or lost). For Sending, it is only in interaction with other actors, by successfully establishing authority through certain actions and discourses, that IOs gain power and agency. In concrete terms, Sending reconstructs how the United Nations (UN) Secretariat and its then Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, came to be in a position of authority to design and lead peacekeeping operations. According to Sending, this development cannot be explained solely by the bureaucratic attributes of the UN Secretariat. Rather, it was Hammarskjöld's proactive "claim to represent the *international* as a distinct space where some tasks were to be handled by the Secretariat [that] gave the Secretariat and the Secretary-General a level of authority vis-à-vis member states" (2015: 2, emphasis in original). The agency of the UN Secretariat was therefore the result of competition with other actors (in this case, member states) and the successful establishment of a new niche in the social field ("the international").

However, competition is not the only way in which IOs can interact with their direct environment. An example of the social constitution of IO agency through collaboration between actors is Bode's analysis of the dynamic interaction between the "three United Nations"—member states, UN officials, and NGOs—in the context of the Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) agenda. Similar to Sending, Bode understands IOs as embedded in a "hierarchically structured social space" (Bode 2018: 296), in which different positions allow actors to engage in certain practices (or not). By reconstructing the development and institutionalization of the human rights-based CAAC

agenda, Bode demonstrates how the United Nations gained agency through informal coalition building among its three parts—"making member states go further than they had perhaps intended" (Bode 2018: 312). Her analysis shows that social belonging to either of the "three UNs" shaped the way in which certain practices were performed. While UN Security Council (UNSC) members (First UN), relying on their relatively secure place within the established order, engage in "strategic," space-controlling practices, NGOs (as part of the less powerful, less established Third UN) engage in "tactical," space-subverting practices (Bode 2018: 297). The agency of the UN Secretariat (Second UN) is thus not given; it depends on, and is formed by, social context. The same applies to the other "UNs," which are also socially constituted through their relation to their respective counterparts. In brief, IO agency emerges from the collaboration of different actors in the field.

Note that processes of interaction and competition between IOs and other actors in the field not only shape the agency of the IO but also have an impact on their respective counterparts. Anderl (2022), for example, shows how the Global Justice Movement was split into two parts *through its interaction* with the World Bank. The resulting "broken solidarity" between the more moderate and the more radical parts of the movement weakened the agency of the transnational advocacy network as a whole.

Professional networks

However, IO agency is not just constituted by the social field in which the organization is embedded. The social constitution of IO agency at the meso-level is also manifested in the diffusion of ideas and preferences across networks. This line of research is based on the idea that IOs can be seen as "open systems" (Scott 1981; Koch 2009). According to this theoretical understanding, IOs are not closed boxes or containers but open systems with permeable boundaries to the outside world, "constituted by and reproduced through their interactions with their environment" (Lipson 2007: 9).

One advantage of this conception of IOs is that it enables us to explain in greater detail "how professional networks cut across IOs" (Seabrooke and Sending 2015: 13; Seabrooke and Henriksen 2017)—and how this, in turn, affects stability and change in IOs. The underlying observation is that modern IOs are permeated by specific networks of professionals who share similar socialization and training (e.g. in "results-based" approaches, project management with "clients," etc.). IOs are thus not isolated actors with their own rules, preferences, and cultures, but have many things in common with other IOs in their field. In this regard, IO agency is constituted by the "value registers and skills of the professionals that populate the environment in which IOs operate" (Seabrooke and Sending 2015: 4). Kortendiek, for example, shows how policy implementation of several IOs (e.g. UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Frontex) in the context of "mixed migration" is significantly influenced by transnational expert networks. These experts

not only share (and translate) knowledge across organizations but also shape IO agency by "creat[ing] practical guidelines that instruct fieldworkers on how to govern mixed migration on the ground" (Kortendiek 2021: 321; see also Kortendiek 2024; Reiners 2022; Littoz-Monnet 2020 and in this volume). Professional expert networks thus empower IOs by providing them with new ideas and expert authority but also constrain their agency by limiting their ability to do things differently than other IOs in the field. Meso-level analyses of the social constitution of IO agency that examine the diffusion processes and the role of expert networks can shed light on these ambivalent effects.

The micro-level constitution of IOs through practice

According to a third, somewhat more radical view of IO agency as socially constituted, IO agency depends neither solely on abstract discourse nor on concrete social relations. Instead, it is "up for grabs" in particular situations of practice and depends on concrete actualization by particular individuals. IO agency may thus be actualized and constituted differently, depending on the situation and actor. In every concrete instantiation of practice, even those of relatively minor importance, the agency of IOs—i.e. their capacity to act in a specific situation—is not merely reproduced but changed and altered, contested and reshaped. Two approaches can illuminate this phenomenon: a focus on situations (or moments) and a focus on individuals (or practitioners).

Situations

It is a basic social fact that, at any given moment in time, social reality is not only merely reproduced but also undergoes change. After all, history never repeats itself in an identical fashion. On the level of social theory, Butler (1993) has claimed this for gender roles, introducing the concept of "reiteration" (drawing on Derrida's interpretation of Austin's theory of speech acts; Derrida 1988). Gender roles are never rigidly fixed. They are the product of specific performances, which draw on (while also continuously altering and transforming) broader social discourses and power structures. This radical view of agency does not imply that "anything goes." On the contrary, it brings to the fore a very basic truth about human practice, a truth that is essential for an adequate understanding of practice—namely, that every moment is different from the previous moment and that repetition is never identical reproduction (Arfi 2020). Even large, macro-level structures undergo change at the same time as they are reproduced. A focus on specific, often seemingly unimportant social situations can reveal how this is the case.

When it comes to IO agency, there has been relatively little research on how basic social characteristics of IO agency are at stake and are transformed in practice. One relevant study is Schindler's in-depth examination of two specific debates in the World

Food Programme's (WFP) intergovernmental steering committee in 1988 and 1989. At the time, the WFP was engaged in a ferocious and protracted conflict with one of its parent organizations, the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The conflict concerned the institutional status of the WFP and specifically the degree of autonomy it possessed from its "parents," the FAO and the UN, as well as broader political questions of North–South politics and the individual relationship between the two executive leaders of the organizations, James Ingram (WFP) and Edouard Saouma (FAO). Schindler (2014) shows how very basic questions of agency were at stake in the intergovernmental debates. Who acts at a specific moment: IOs or states? And how do they act at a specific moment: by following social rules or based on calculations of interests? Individual contributions to the debates delivered specific, contested answers to these questions. Each moment in the historical process was marked by shifting answers to the questions of who acts and how. The boundaries between IOs and states as actors, and rule-following and calculation as types of action, were subject to constant contestation and redefinition. From this perspective, any attempt to settle these questions based on analytical assumptions or empirical investigation is doomed to failure. Instead, what is necessary is to trace the way in which the boundaries between specific types of actors and specific types of action are continuously redrawn. At every moment, the agents involved are constantly being reshaped by their actions; that is, in Austin's terms, the doers emerge from the deed.

This type of examination requires one to examine practice very closely—specifically, the moment in which it unfolds. It requires one to show empirically that neither the nature of (macro-level) social structures nor of (meso-level) social relationships is fixed but is subject to continuous contestation and change (Schindler 2020). This radical view of agency, which is indebted to post-structuralist, feminist, and pragmatist theory, is rather rare in IPS studies of IOs. As shown above, many accounts of IO practice draw predominantly on Weberian and Bourdieusian concepts (for a general critique of practice theory in that sense, see Schindler and Wille 2015; Bueger and Gadinger 2015). This is regrettable because it means that the potential for transformation inherent in every single moment—taking into account that every single situation involves both stability and change—has not received sustained attention in studies of IOs. To be fair, this potential is discussed in the empirical sections of specific contributions. One notable example is Barnett's remarkable study *Eyewitness to a Genocide* (2002), in which he uses counterfactual reasoning to show how specific courses of action depended on specific actions by specific individuals in specific moments—a speech that UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali did not hold, a telegram by Roméo Dallaire that might have been received differently in UN headquarters in New York. Another example is Jennifer Mitzen's book *Power in Concert* (2013), which sheds light on how the peacebuilding agency of the "first international organization" (Langhorne 1986)—the Concert of Europe that emerged from the Congress of Vienna—depended on its continuous reproduction and reinvention by specific diplomats in specific moments of

crises. A third example is Christian Bueger's examination of the agency of pirates as constituted through specific assemblages (Bueger 2019) and his earlier study of how different forms of agency (five types of "political agencement") in the UN Peacebuilding Commission are continuously contested in every specific moment of practice (Bueger 2011). These important examples reveal how specific moments of practice have the potential to both reproduce and transform the agency that IOs possess.

Individuals

Another possibility for grasping the micro-level social constitution of IO agency is to examine the role of individual actors. This may seem, at first sight, to be a surprising analytical move; after all, isn't the insight into the constitution of the agency of one actor (i.e. IOs) here merely the consequence of taking for granted that of others (i.e. individuals)? Of course, the agency of individual staff members is itself socially constituted (and not least by their relationship to IOs). However, we maintain that a focus on the role of individuals can be a valuable analytical move in that it can reveal an important sense in which the agency of this larger kind of actor—IOs—is dependent on specific practices and cannot be taken for granted. This move is not "final"; it is necessary to enquire into the social constitution of individual agency, too, and this should be part of attending to the role of individuals. Yet, the move is important, because it can show that the work done in the "engine room" of the organization has a crucial influence on how IOs act in the world—that is IO agency, as we understand it here. Despite constraining social structures (discourses, environment, culture), there is a sense in which IO staff are not only the products but also the producers of these structures; they can unfold IO agency in a specific direction that is, while structurally enabled, not structurally predetermined.

Although the role of IO staff has long been ignored by mainstream IO research, there are by now a number of studies that explicitly examine their agency and influence. Chwieroth's work on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is one example. Challenging the "unsatisfying" (Chwieroth 2009: xii) but dominant portrait of IO staff members as "creatures of habit who, once socialized into a particular structure, could not recognize, resist, or reshape these habits" (Chwieroth 2009: xii), Chwieroth explores the inner workings of the IMF and shows how the "internal debates [among staff] shaped the organization's behavior" (Chwieroth 2009: 3). For Chwieroth, these "battles of ideas" (Chwieroth 2009: 40) within the organization played a central role in the normative and behavioral changes of the IMF. IMF staff—as "proactive actors" (Chwieroth 2009: 40)—exercised "significant autonomy" (Chwieroth 2009: 3) in developing the new approaches. Weaver (2008) describes similar processes at the World Bank. She demonstrates how a small group of World Bank staff, acting as norm entrepreneurs, successfully developed and promoted the "good governance and anti-corruption" agenda in the 1990s. Despite the inert organizational culture within the

bank, which made organizational reforms very difficult, these employees managed to take advantage of a window of opportunity to bring about change at the Bank. Here again, it was the IO staff pushing for (incremental) changes that constituted IO agency and shaped how the IO operated within the realm of possibilities provided by social structures.[3]

IO agency, however, is constituted not only by IO staff driving small-scale innovation within the given structures but also by more fundamental criticism or protest "from within." IO employees' agency is also reflected in the fact that some individuals openly criticize the structures in which they are embedded. Inspired by the "sociology of critique" (Boltanski and Thevenot 2006; Celikates 2009; Gadinger 2016; Schindler and Wille 2019) and based on the recognition that people are not "judgmental dopes" but have critical capacities, Christian (2022) shows that some UN Secretariat staff members voice "criticism from within" in order to change their organization's internal procedures and policies. Although the structural environment (external and internal pressures, bureaucratic obstacles, etc.) does not provide fertile ground for open criticism in IOs (Christian 2024), some UN employees nevertheless challenge the status quo and try to change the way the UN operates "on the ground." They do so, for example, by invoking the expert authority attributed to them, by using the political capital they have acquired over time, or by leveraging existing alliances with other critical actors. In a similar vein, Autesserre looks at those individuals in *Peaceland* who "actively challenge the international peacebuilders' dominant practices and suggest alternative modes of operation" (Austerre 2014: 7). For Autesserre, "exceptional individuals" (2014: 43) can change the way peacebuilding works on the ground. The social constitution of IO agency—and the specific direction the IO takes—is therefore also affected by the critical capacities of IO staff.

While several studies look at internal change processes driven by IO employees, few studies focus explicitly on the specific micro-foundations (i.e. the social constitution) of individual agency and the skills or prerequisites needed by IO staff to successfully shape their organization's behavior. Nair (2020) is an important exception in this regard. Analyzing informal practices of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) bureaucrats, Nair shows how certain "servant performances" that require emotional labor can "empower [bureaucrats] in their interactions with states" (Nair 2020: 573). Through these servant performances, ASEAN staff "earn the trust of state representatives and engage in a range of empowering informal practices in the backstage without being seen to do so" (Nair 2020: 574). These empowering practices include whispering to state officials, propagating ideas, building informal coalitions, or cultivating patrons (Nair 2020: 574). By showing that some bureaucrats are better at this than others because of their habitus and class background, Nair demonstrates that IO staff agency is both socially produced and acquired through competent practices.[4] It is through these competent practices that (some) IO staff members exercise agency and

thus influence their organizations' 'capacity … to shape important social outcomes, to make history' (Weldes and Duvall, this volume).

Hence, by exploiting the existing room for maneuver, driving small innovations, fundamentally criticizing the status quo, or performing competent servant practices, IO staff members exercise individual agency and thus shape the way IOs act in the world. It is important to note, however, that the fact that IO employees play an active role in the social constitution of IO agency also implies that they are actively involved in the *reproduction* of IOs. Even though there is a tendency in IR literature to associate individual agency with change, this is (at most) one half of the story. IO staff agency also constitutes IO agency in a way that reproduces existing (ideological) narratives or behaviors. IO employees are not necessarily "the good guys" who change the encrusted structures in which they operate. Instead, in most cases, their practices preserve and reproduce those very structures. Sondarjee, for example, demonstrates how World Bank employees promote "stability through change" (Sondarjee 2021: 353) by "translating radical practices into technocratic ones" (2021: 350). For Sondarjee, World Bank staff do have agency; they are not simply bureaucratic machines. Yet, it is precisely this agency of staff, their supposedly innovative practices, that stabilize the "overall ethos of the World Bank" (2021: 349).

Conclusion

IPS studies of IOs are a vibrant field of research. From their beginnings in the constructivist conceptualization of IOs as bureaucracies, these studies have continuously refined the understanding of the social sources and the social forms of IO agency. In the unfolding of this research, the idea that this agency can be taken as an analytical given has become increasingly questionable. IOs are not only endowed with agency through (macro-level) discourse but also stand in ever-changing (meso-level) social relationships. Moreover, and crucially, both their discourse and their relations are "up for grabs" at the micro level, that is in concrete situations of practice and in the concrete deeds of individual practitioners.

Are IOs anything fixed? Have we not done a "U-turn" here to the beginning of this chapter, back to the idea that IOs are mere structures through which others act? While there is doubtless progress in IPS work on IOs, it seems crucial to acknowledge for IO research what is true for IO practice: change and stability are not exclusive phenomena, but go hand in hand with each other. There is no perennial solution to the twofold problem that grasping the agency of some (IOs? professions? individuals?) risks losing track of the agency of others (states? NGOs? subalterns? animals? things?). What IPS can contribute to IO studies is not an analytical solution but continued critical awareness of the problem. After all, it is impossible to shed light on everything. But

what we can do, and hope to have done here, is to raise the awareness that where there is light, there is also shadow.

Notes

1. On neo-realism, see Waltz (1979); Mearsheimer (1994). For the rationalist institutionalist answer, see Keohane (1984); Martin and Simmons (1998); Koremenos, Lipson and Snidel (2001).
2. For instance, while the theory of *organizational ecology* emphasizes the influence of institutional environments on organizational behavior (cf. Abbott, Green, and Keohane 2016: 247; see also Lake 2021), it does not take into account the social sources of agency. Instead, it highlights the "importance of institutional landscapes for organizational behavior" (Abbott, Green, and Keohane 2016: 249) and focuses on factors such as density (population, niches) or resources in the field. In other words, the emphasis is placed on the structural "constraints and opportunities that institutional environments create" (Abbott, Green, and Keohane 2016: 251), not on social relations that endow IOs with a specific kind of agency. Similarly, Bayerlein, Knill, and Steinebach (2020) think of organizational behavior and varying "administrative styles" as a (rationally calculated) *reaction* to internal and external challenges to the organization. Thus, these rational approaches to IO autonomy and behavior do not understand IO agency as "socially constituted" but as primarily determined by given resources and rational calculation.
3. There is now a growing body of research showing that individuals in IOs have greater agency than has long been assumed. This is especially true for individuals in powerful positions within IOs (cf. Cox 1969). Karlsrud, for example, shows that the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in United Nations peacekeeping missions have "considerable room for discretion" (Karlsrud 2013: 527), which they (can) use in their decision-making. But even "ordinary" IO employees can exercise influence: "there is more room for maneuver and autonomy for members of the international civil service, particularly in the intellectual and advocacy realms, than is often supposed" (Weiss and Daws 2009: 14). By exercising individual agency, IO staff thus contribute to the social constitution of their organization's agency.
4. As a general rule, it seems crucial that IO employees know how to *navigate* within their organization. Ege, Bauer, and Wagner (2021) refer to this important source of influence for IO staff as "process expertise": only if IO employees know how things are done within their organization can they influence the agenda, help shape the framing of issues, and thus exercise agency.

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CHAPTER 40

EXPERTS

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Introduction

Encyclopedias define an expert as "one who is very skilful and well informed in some special field" (Webster's New World Dictionary 1968: 168). My kids, when I asked them, "So, for you, what is an expert?," responded the following. The younger one, who just turned 8 years old, said that "an expert is a pro," while the older one, who is soon to be 12, told me that "an expert is someone who knows everything in a field." The dictionary, and both children, are right to say that an expert is someone very knowledgeable and that this knowledge, often, is professionalized. Yet, what constitutes expert knowledge is far from static. The Renaissance "expert" gained recognition from being educated as *widely* as possible, whether in military affairs, the arts, literature, or the sciences. The contemporary expert, who circulates and advises in the spheres of global governance, is, for its part, highly specialized in one discipline, in fact most often a "sub-discipline" such as "education economics," or "environmental law," or simply endowed with *skills*, like the auditors, methodologists, or data analysts who pepper fields as diverse as health, development, security, or climate change. We ought, thus, to pay attention to the roles of the political and the social in delineating what knowledge is considered as "expert" and, thus, authoritative.

Experts, indeed, hold "an intermediary position between science, universities, and knowledge production, on the one side, and power, politics, parliaments and making binding decisions, on the other" (Berling and Bueger 2015: 9). As such, "experts" are those whose knowledge is *recognized* and deemed useful for the purpose of governing. The status of expert, thus, is highly exclusive (Littoz-Monnet 2022). Designating some people and their knowledge as valid and relevant at the same time disqualifies the rest as "non-expert," "nonscientific," "biased," or "ignorant." The exclusive dynamics at play in the making of the status of "expert" make it necessary to examine and self-reflect on the politics of that status. This entails questioning mundane and seemingly commonsensical notions we hold about what kinds of knowledge are valid and worthwhile to address problems.

This chapter does a tour of how the political and the social have been conceived in existing research on the making of "experts," shedding light on how often disconnected

literatures would gain from greater dialogue and combination. As proposed by Weldes and Duvall in their lead chapter for this part (this volume), I consider the "social" but also the "political" in their alternative "scales", whether as "discourse and structure," "relationality," or "the context of the moment of action." Taking these alternative and (only analytically distinguishable) scales as points of departure, I highlight alternative understandings of how the socio-political constitutes experts, navigating from the role of dominant paradigms and their own logics of ordering (discourse and structure) to the direct interpersonal relationships among specific groupings (relationality) and the enactment of expert status through language, actions, and the mobilization of material artifacts (the moment of action). While doing so, I propose avenues to help better conceive the *continuous entanglement between macro-level structures, meso-level associations, and individual doings*. In a last section, I propose a description of the archetypal contemporaneous "global expert," as the constituted subject of a special form of politics.

Defining and undefining "experts"

In International Relations (IR), politics, and public policy, the status of expert is largely associated with the possession of scientific knowledge. The "expert" is seen as a "scientist," or a highly qualified professional, whose skills are also recognized because they were obtained through an academic training or perhaps a long and specialized professional experience (Boswell 2017). This is well put by Collins and Evans, who argue that "expertise is the real and substantive possession of groups of experts" (2007: 2). Experts, thus, distinguish themselves from the "non-experts" by their possession of knowledge of facts and theories but also methods and techniques within a given domain. Such knowledge can be gained through training and certified through the "university degree" and/or through the possession of a long-term professional experience in a given domain. From this perspective, expertise is, in theory, a substantive quality, which anyone can possess, provided they undergo the requisite training and enculturation in the specialist field. According to this view, expertise is also isolated from the social and the political. Such accounts rely on the assumption that the development of expertise is tied to that of science and that scientific knowledge is developed independently of the circumstances of time, place, and social conditions. Scholars who have adhered to this vision also aimed to make their discipline a tool that would improve the rationality of decision-making and were swift to dismiss politics, seen as an obstacle to rational and well-founded policy (Laswell 1950).

This view of expert knowledge has long informed the literature in IR, which, for that reason, has mainly concentrated on identifying the scope conditions of the influence of researchers on policy and the obstacles that prevent a better flow of scientific research to policymaking. In *When Knowledge Is Power*, Ernst Haas (1990) sheds light on how

"invisible colleges" of likeminded professionals from different disciplines could, at times, influence international organizations, which, however, remain fundamentally habit driven. In 1992, the "epistemic communities" concept entered the mainstream of IR scholarship with Peter Haas's analysis of the role of experts in promoting international policy coordination (Haas 1992). As policy ambiguity creates uncertainty in decision-makers' minds, they seek information to inform their choices and "epistemic communities" are endowed with the possibility of providing information that excludes or enhances different alternatives.

Yet, scientists, professionals, activists, or so-called "lay experts" all compete for epistemic authority over issues and problems (Abbott 1988; Littoz-Monnet 2022; Sending 2015). Experts drawing their authority from science may compete with policymakers who have professional knowledge and might be able to claim a better understanding of problems and policy constraints. Scientists and professionals may, in turn, compete with groups who have "knowledge through experience," either as they routinely use a given service, or technology, or as they claim direct knowledge of local conditions and circumstances in a domain. In all fields, different groups or individuals make claims to knowledge in relation to a specific object of governance, mobilizing different forms of epistemic legitimacy, be it "scientific authority" (with competition playing out among disciplines), "know-how," or "experience." Acknowledging the politics inherent to the delineation of who is seen as "expert" does not imply that those recognized as such do not actually possess any kind of "special" knowledge. Clearly, not "anyone" can advise policymakers on the risks entailed by new technologies, how to prioritize development aid, or yet plan urban development. An "expert" does know something, but her knowledge must *also* be recognized and deemed more valuable than that of other possessors of knowledge. Experts' knowledge is substantive *and* socio-political.

PRODUCING EXPERTS

Discourses and orderings: Producing the kinds

Scholars in science and technology studies (STS) have long pointed out that expertise "embeds and is embedded in social practices, identities, norms, conventions, discourses, instruments and institutions" (Jasanoff 2004). "Co-production," a concept coined by Sheila Jasanoff, depicts the way knowledge evolves together with representations and discourses, in a perpetual and mutually reinforcing dynamic (Lynch and Jasanoff 1998). "Experts," as subjects, are indeed constituted through the workings of specific discursive arrangements, but also stabilize and sustain these through the knowledge they produce. Distinct episteme, discourses, or ways of apprehending social reality come to be dominant at distinct socio-historical moments. Such discourses encompass certain assumptions about what goals are worth pursuing, what problems are

worth addressing, and what kind of solutions might be valuable. They are a form of storytelling, which makes sense of reality and guides political action. The emergence and stabilization of such discourses is not taking place in a void; it intersects with specific configurations of power relations and resource allocation, associated with given social structures (Fairclough 2003). The so-called "Washington consensus" is a case in point; while it powerfully produced subjects and objects, it was itself supported by an economic elite, in US academia but also in the corporate sector. Dominant discourses, themselves sustained by resources and hierarchies, exercise power in constituting a certain kind of expert subject, thus empowering certain voices, silencing others, and delineating the kinds of conflicts that are possible at all. They also make certain governance and knowledge techniques appear legitimate and necessary, while others become sidelined. These dominant understandings and the experts they produce become commonsensical and go largely unquestioned.

Clearly, there is never just one single discourse that shapes all aspects of life at one given point of time. What has been referred to as the "economization" of life, however, holds a specific role as a structuring form of politics. For Foucault, economization is a defining aspect of neoliberalism, which produces specific subjectivities and state forms. When the economic logic starts to pervade everything, all problems become scrutinized in terms of their efficiency and cost-effectiveness (Foucault 2008: 246–247). From a more structuralist perspective, economization results from the changing exigencies of the economic system and the power of the capitalist class in shaping these processes. Whatever the approach taken, economization gives prominence to experts trained in economics and their associated skills. As argued by Bourdieu, the field of economics operates as a dominant field, which also delineates the kinds of knowledge that come to be mobilized in other fields (Bourdieu 1996). Thus, "economists are not just a social group with increasing importance in the academic context but also most certainly the producers of some of the most important tools and perceptions to govern today's societies" (Maesse et al. 2022: 5; Schmidt-Wellenburg and Lebaron 2018). Their dominance also manifests itself in the making of novel kinds of specialists, such as "health economists," "education economists," or "development economists," who are trained to look at an increasing array of questions through an economic lens. It is also visible when knowledge techniques from the field of economics, like the cost–benefit form of analysis, indicators, rankings, or yet evaluations become standard knowledge techniques everywhere (Best 2017).

While "economization" operates as a dominant episteme, or "meta-discourse," it also competes, overlaps, or cohabits with other ways of apprehending reality. Scholars have discussed, alternatively, the "medicalization," "clinicalization," or "securitization" of the world and how this also relates to the validation of certain kinds of professionals and their knowledges (Timmermans and Berg 2003; Donovan 2018; Jatteau 2013). Thus, clinical modes of reasoning, associated with "What works?" kinds of questions and experimental models have become dominant modes of thinking beyond medicine.

Randomized controlled trials (RCTs), widely supported by the resources of the pharmaceutical and agrobusiness industries, are used to produce studies or test potential "interventions" in domains as diverse as the environment, development economics, education, and finance (Wahlberg and McGoey 2007; Donovan 2018; Sending 2015). Banerjee and Duflo, winners of the 2020 Nobel Prize in Economics argue that "the cleanest way to answer such questions (about poverty) is to mimic the randomized trials that are used in medicine to evaluate the effectiveness of new drugs" (Banerjee and Duflo 2011). The clinical model has given authority to knowledge produced through its methods but also to new casts of experts, such as epistemologists and methodologists, who are now prominent across fields (Littoz-Monnet and Uribe 2023). Similarly, vast bodies of literature have discussed how biomedicalism, or developmentalism, act as dominant discourses that spread out to a number of formerly unrelated problems and delineate who can be authorized as expert and what kinds of knowledges seem relevant. The power of these alternative understandings can neither be "measured" nor compared, as their constitutive effects are indirect and diffuse and often intermesh.

Sometimes, powerful discourses are hardly visible and emerge under the guise of being something else, like a technological transformation. What some have called the "datafication" of life is an instance of this. With the spreading out of "big data" and the digitalization of our societies more broadly (Flyverbom, Deibert, and Matten 2017), an increasing number of aspects of our lives are turned into computerized data (Aradau and Blanke 2017). In contrast to what is now seen as sparse and unhelpful statistical data, big data is relentlessly captured and emanates from everywhere, and data analysis is carried through statistical methods but also machine learning, artificial intelligence, and data mining in order to automate "data-driven algorithms [that] induce models from the data" (Abbott 2014, as cited in Aradau and Blanke 2017: 379). This new "data world," however, is not *only* a technological shift but also an epistemic one, as data gathering and assembling are increasingly seen *in themselves* as the way to govern and solve problems. With this emergence of this episteme, data analysts, coders, or visualization experts, who can manage, sort out, calculate, and present such data, are the new experts of the digitalized society. Their knowledge is perceived as increasingly desirable, authoritative, and necessary to manage, calculate, and analyze the large sums of data that are being assembled with digitalization techniques.

These discursive processes favor certain *kinds* of experts, endowed with certain forms of knowledge, skills, or methods. While economization, clinicalization, or datafication, are not just "the same," they operate well together and often rely on similar assumptions and logics about what makes knowledge valid, what counts, and how to evaluate what works. IOs and domestic bureaucracies thus rely on those highly technical forms of knowledge produced by economists, statisticians, or data analysts. Private providers of expertise are also increasingly called in, whether in finance, health, or security (Littoz-Monnet and Osorio Garate 2023). Testifying to this turn, private consultancy firms often act as knowledge providers for domestic governments

or international bureaucracies (Eckl and Hanrieder 2023; Uribe 2024). Dominant discourses produce the kinds of experts which are seen to matter, and the latter in turn stabilize and give traction to such discourses. Such entanglements also play out in the more immediate and tangible social relations of social groups, whether professions, communities of practice, or networks, as will be discussed below.

Relationality: Producing the roles

The making of "experts" takes place at specific times and in places but also within given bounded spaces, communities, fields, or groupings of sort, those networks of relations in which "the subject is in direct relational interaction with others" (Weldes and Duvall, this volume). The status of expert, as a role endowed with epistemic authority and prestige, is delineated and negotiated through social relations in given groups. The sociology of professions, but also the practice literature, emphasize that "status," "competence," or "epistemic authority" is attributed within a given field, community, or network. Which "knowers" gain expert status has to do with the social processes by which authority is stabilized (Krisch 2017).

Whether we think in terms of "communities of practice," professional networks, or fields, groupings of sort are central to the making of experts for two reasons, First, they typically act as *loci* where specific criteria of recognition are delineated and negotiated. A number of visible and visible barriers gatekeep whose knowledge can count as expert. Such criteria may be related to speaking a particular language possessing certain degrees or certifications, mastering certain skills, being published in certain journals, having worked in certain places, being integrated into specific networks, or acting in a certain way (Biersteker 2014; Boswell 2017). Second, they also act as arenas where dominant understandings of problems are fabricated or stabilized, thus directly delineating how objects are governed. As argued by Sending, fields are organized around "governance objects"; "their logic, boundaries, and social organization are closely tied up with how the objects of governance are defined" (Sending 2017: 28).

In Bourdieu's work, recognition is field specific. The field is a sphere in which participants share some assumptions about the "rules of the game" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Within fields, experts are recognized as having a specific and advanced level of field-specific knowledge. The typical expert in a transnational governance field will, typically, gain recognition through having an academic degree in a high-profile institution but also belonging to professional associations, sitting on editorial boards of journals, and having professional experience across a number of organizations and spheres. These different resources (training, professional experience, network) mutually reinforce one another so that a narrow and exclusive group of professionals gains expert status, while those who do not have access to these same resources tend to be sidelined (Littoz-Monnet 2022). Thus, recognition is a reflection of both "technical capacity and

social power" (Bourdieu 1975: 19). Participants hold different forms of resources or "capital" (social, epistemic, financial), but the capital available to an actor is given by the structure of the field. Sending (2017), Seabrooke and Henriksen (2017), and Bigo (2011) have developed a rich agenda on the role of professionals in global governance, building on Bourdieu's theory in order to understand how authority emerges out of a process of competition for recognition within fields. As Collins and Evans (2007: 2) note, the sociology of professions typically treats expertise as an attribution, a quality that the experts possessed by virtue of recognition granted by significant others, which is thereby reducible to their interests and role set.

In the "practice literature," scholars have emphasized that communities of practice "create a shared practice" that embodies "the knowledge the community develops, shares, and maintains" (Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002: 28–29). Performances of a practice contain claims to authority or competence that tell who can be seen as "expert," automatically excluding those that cannot make claims to these. Competence, thus, is negotiated socially, and power emerges from a socially negotiated recognition of mastering a given practice. Whether in relation to fields, communities of practice, or networks, existing scholarship has shed light on what Duvall and Weldes, in their lead essay to this part of the volume, refer to as "the more direct and tangible network of relations in which people are embedded and constituted" (introduction). Like other figures, the "expert" is a socially constituted subject "with specific capacities in networks/institutions or similar" as well as "attendant resources." The social component of expert status does not imply that such status is unstable and continuously subject to renegotiation. While it is never fully settled, specific workings give it a degree of stability. The circulation of experts across spheres of governance and organizations, the materialization of their expertise in specific inscriptions which become rehearsed and cited, and the easy transformation of given forms of capital into others, results in the status of "expert" remaining an exclusive one.

Crucially, *"dominant" social structures and discourses also delineate what forms of knowledge can count as expertise within bounded spaces*. Benchmarks of knowledge validity are defined not only within a community but also in relation to discourses that operate at a more structural level and define what can be considered as "valid" or "scientific" knowledge. For instance, the special position of economics, both within the social sciences and beyond, has favored those possessors of skills valued in economics. Fourcade points to the "unique position" of economists and the way this has produced deeply asymmetrical exchanges across fields but also within fields (Fourcade 2006). Their dominance, sustained itself by "economization" as an all-encompassing discourse, has resulted in the validation of forms of knowing that fashion social reality as in need of being counted, measured, audited, or evaluated. This is manifest in the spreading out of knowledge techniques such as cost–benefit forms of analysis, return on investments calculations, modelling techniques, and so on (Best 2017). Those who can claim mastery to these are more likely to be seen as authoritative and competent, and

thus authorized as experts, regardless of the domain. Economics and its modes of reasoning, calculation techniques, and metrics have been adopted in the governance of gender, health, agriculture, and poverty, to list a few.

Similarly, clinicalization is a particularly interesting case in point, because its logics and techniques can travel particularly well to other domains. Thus, development, education, or nutrition have all started becoming known through the lens of "experiments" of a randomized kind, where randomistas or methodologists have emerged as a new kind of experts, who know how to "test" the efficiency of medicines, but also of other forms of interventions, like the impact of giving micro credits to specific groups, or the effects of environmental exposures to potentially hazardous substances (Littoz-Monnet and Uribe 2023).

The way group involvement dynamics intermesh with structural constraints and dominant "macro discourses" needs further examination. Discourses and structures shape the space within which actors operate (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 16) so that relationships within groups tend to replicate existing stratifications (Dezalay and Madsen 2017: 26). Group relationships inscribe and replicate financial but also epistemic hierarchies and the power of their protagonists in global governance. The authorization of people as "expert" is embroiled with discourses, fashions, and power dynamics, which operate beyond networks, fields, or communities of practice and which delineate what knowledge forms and skills are considered valid or relevant (Babb 2001; Best 2013). Which voices are included, and which ones are left out, depends on "the fashionable, the sophisticated and what counts" (Leander and Weaver 2018: 1). Visible or invisible barriers, be they ideational, epistemic, resource-based, or material, constrain access to the status of "expert" in given domains and delineate the roles that experts can play.

Of course, social processes within groups do not just replicate dominant structures and discourses in an automatic fashion; relationships within bounded spaces are shaped by structural constraints but also provide a terrain for opportunities (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 16). They have their own logics and may also act as sites of contestation and destabilization. Events perceived as disruptive, scientific discoveries, the mediatization of new "facts," or the activism of specific groups or individuals, who bring problems to light, can all contribute to the destabilization of existing narratives and the questioning of the experts upon whom they rely. However, one should be cautious when examining apparent transformations. Apparent changes can be superficial, as is sometimes the case with the setting in place of participatory mechanisms and their associated aims of including "lay experts" or local forms of knowledge. Similarly, the creation of new kinds of experts does not necessarily signal change. Expert bioethicists, for instance, emerged as a new cast of experts in a context in which scientists were seen as unable to "self-regulate" themselves and decide on the ethics of their activities. Yet, the way bioethics has developed as a profession has rather stabilized existing discourses, which assume that innovation is "a good thing," which

simply needs to be "explained to the public" in order to be accepted (Littoz-Monnet 2020).

The moment of action: Producing the doings

"Experts" are also being produced and reproduced through the enactment of their expert status in the moment of action. Their authority is not just "there"; it needs reiteration, through language, practices, the mobilization of knowledge techniques, and material artifacts. Sociologists and anthropologists have, thus, paid attention to the micro-level enactment of expert status, examining how experts speak and act. The use of a specific kind of "expert" rhetoric has been largely discussed. Existing research has highlighted that experts of global governance are associated with a language of neutrality, scientificity, and technicity (Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Shore and Wright 2015). Consultants, for instance, rely on the scientific method "to achieve their effect" (Christensen and Skærbæk 2010: 527). The language mobilized by experts embodies and reasserts "control and asymmetry in interaction" in between those authorized as "experts" and those whose knowledge is not recognized (Goodwin 1994: 626). Such "representations of having valuable expertise" can also be mobilized "in the face of suspicion or scepticism" to reassert expert competence and authority (Menchik 2021).

Beyond language, experts have their own rituals and body gestures. STS ethnographies of expertise have examined how "experts" stand, use their hands, and dress and how these bodily doings constitute their authority and position their ways of knowing as expertise (Boyer 2008; Carr 2010). Experts have been described as enacting an inflated sense of "self-confidence," which gives them power but also participates in downright policy failures (Scott 1999). In relation to this, the mobilization of material artifacts is also central to the enactment of expert status. Studies of the medical profession have shown how the "white coat" produces doctors' authority (Menchik 2021). In the bureaucratic sites of global governance, dressing "professional," but also mobilizing specific objects, such as an organizational logo, a seminal report, graphs, or yet visualizations, all subtlety enact authority, thus producing or sustaining the authority of those who mobilize them while they are performing. From this perspective, expert status is enacted in the micro-moves of people's sayings and doings. Yet, these micro-enactments of expert status also reproduce "discourses that are constitutive 'all the way down' " (Epstein 2010), as well as relationships in specific groupings that delineate who has authority, what ways of doing are rewarded, and what power plays are possible at all. Of course, people also have their own forms of agencies and may disrupt established orders, playing out with expectations, resisting to them, and sometimes unsettling them. Thus, those not recognized as experts may "borrow" the rhetorical tactics of established experts and learn to speak in a scientific and technical fashion (Epstein 1995), while established experts may disrupt dominant modes of thinking by speaking or acting in subversive ways. Incremental change may

occur, and novel categories of experts may emerge (Eyal 2013), but often new categories borrow the language, tactics, and ways of doings of established experts and their knowledges in order to be heard.

Making the contemporaneous global expert

Experts abound in global governance, from the highly qualified staff of international organizations (IOs), the scientists appointed in expert commissions, consultants, think tanks, to private experts from the industry called in to advise policy, who make for the wide net of advisors in global governance fora. I argue that the archetypal expert of today's global governance is purchasable, endowed with highly specialized skills, and highly mobile. This *exemplar is a product of a specific kind of ordering*, in which dominant discourses give prominence to certain forms of competences across professional networks. Economization, clinicalization, and datafication, themselves sustained and associated with a specific configuration of resource allocation, indeed operate as dominant and overlapping discourses, which value certain forms of knowledges. Those who can make claims to these in the networks and professional groups of global governance tend, thus, to gain authority, and give further traction to these understandings and the stratifications they reflect and sustain.

Purchasable

Today's experts in global governance increasingly come from the private sphere and therefore sell their knowledge or skills as a commodity. Large consultancies, philanthropic foundations, and private companies increasingly act as providers of knowledge that is seen as expert in global governance fora. To that effect, they have invested a great deal of effort normalizing their expert role, often presenting their advice as an ultimate necessity or as a guarantee for the "effectiveness" of global policies and programs (Leander 2005). Existing scholarship has shed light on the way corporate actors, such as private military companies or private rating agencies, provide knowledge in security or finance, thus defining how such problems are known (Leander 2011; Sinclair 2014). In the field of health, existing research has revealed that corporate actors are increasingly seen as providers of necessary expertise—to the effect that technological and pharmaceutical approaches have been favored, at the neglect of others (Biehl 2007; Kelly and Beisel 2011). The corporate expert often sits in the expert committees set up by IOs, although their advice is not normally remunerated. Private consultants, though, have developed a business model through which they fashion themselves as providers of neutral, disinterested, even scientific advice, which has its price (Christensen and Skærbæk 2010). Large consultancies have become central knowledge providers in global governance fora, overtaking think tanks as providers of

external "expert advice" for IOs. Not only do consultants act as carriers of ideas, such as "abstract managerialism" (Seabrooke and Sending 2020; Momani 2017), but they also directly formulate reform packages in education, health, or development, that tell IO staff, for a very expensive price, how to conduct organizational reforms (Eckl and H anrieder 2023) or manage a multistakeholer platform (Uribe 2024). Consultants "transform the 'contested values' of neoliberalism into what [are] seemingly hard facts" (Christensen and Skærbæk 2010: 532), to assert their authority and proposed solutions. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), for instance, increasingly relies on private consultants, who present their proposed reforms as "necessary" to Southern countries and play a central role in policy roll outs.

Philanthropists, and the organizations they fund, have also increasingly engaged in the production of commodifiable knowledge, either in the form of evaluation reports, cost–benefit calculations, forecasts, and metrics and estimates of all sorts (Littoz-Monnet and Osorio 2023). In a context in which global processes of agenda-setting and prioritization increasingly rely on big data and its analysis, IOs indeed increasingly on privately produced data. Private data institutes have thus emerged in a number of domains, whether migration, global health, or education (Littoz-Monnet and Osorio 202 3; Littoz-Monnet 2024; Williamson 2016). With the big data they own, they also produce a plethora of studies that analyze these numbers and make their way into prestigious scientific journals. When the production of data and research shifts toward the private sphere, private actors do not only offer their "advice" when consulted by public officials, but also the very knowledge upon which global policymaking is based. "Economization," and "datafication," produce the very authority and legitimacy of the consultant, the corporate expert, or the data analyst of private data centers, as well of their approaches, tools and vocabularies for the solving of problems, across field of global governance.

Endowed with generic skills

The global governance expert also increasingly tends to be endowed with generic skills, rather than in-depth knowledge of a specific domain. The knowledge of the expert can consist of possessing knowledge about calculation techniques, specific methods, data analysis, detailed procedures, or even visualization design. Data analysts, auditors, risk assessors, or methodologists flourish and provide advice to IOs and other sites of global governance (Littoz-Monnet and Uribe 2023). These experts advise organizations on how to do an evaluation, evaluate a risk, rate and evaluate evidence, organize a consultation, or correlate data. One example is the development of "safeguards experts," who are increasingly mobilized by IOs to assess and pre-empt the unintended yet harmful social and environmental consequences of their programs. Safeguards expertise is rather generic, however. It consists, essentially, of knowing a set of "tick-the-box" procedures and the "how to" ' of setting in place consultative

processes with relevant actors in a given domain (Gautier 2024). Similarly, methodologists teach IO staff how to do a "systemic review" or a guideline. They advise IOs in health, finance, food safety, or development economics, sitting on a number of expert panels that supervise evidence-making processes (Littoz-Monnet and Uribe 2023). Alternatively, the global governance expert may also rate or grade countries, firms, IOs, or simply "practices" in a given domain (Beaumont and Towns 2021). In finance, for example, the analysts working for rating agencies appraise a country's economic "worth" (Knorr Cetina 2007). "Index providers," a group of highly profitable firms, also create indices about the companies or countries that steer investment, thus largely shaping global finance (Petry, Fichtner, and Heemskerk 2019). Those experts typically present their skills as highly technical, yet essential. The methodologist, the calculator, the risk analyst, or the auditor fashions himself or herself as an objective advisor, evaluator, or controller who orders otherwise messy and somehow unreliable knowledge and policymaking processes. Yet, their "skills" are embedded in specific episteme, whether economization, datafication, or clinicalization, and embody a set of assumptions about what is desirable and valid and how to reach given goals. It is only in a special kind of ideational set-up that such skills can blossom, appear as absolutely indispensable, and empower those who possess them within fields.

Portable

As datafication, economization and clinicalization operate as dominant ways of apprehending reality, those who possess transferable skills such as analyzing and embellishing data or evaluating programs increasingly become authoritative experts. Such professionals increasingly move from one expert panel to the other, and from one organization to the next (Littoz-Monnet and Uribe 2023). The literature on professionals has long pointed to phenomena of circulation across governance fora, whereby high-profile individuals hold multiple roles and identities and circulate between spheres and organizations (Littoz-Monnet 2022; Seabrooke and Henriksen 2017; Vauchez 2008). Such accounts have revealed relationships between seemingly separated spheres or organizations and "inter-locking networks" that deconstruct dichotomies often found in the literature, between the public and the private, or policy and academia (Vauchez 2008). But what we are observing goes beyond multi-hatting, be it simultaneous or successive. With the proliferation of skill-based expertise, it is the knowledge itself that has become fully transferable. Thus, Seabrooke and Sending also note "a broader change where having the skill to operate a task across organizations is more valued than independent expertise" (2020: 804). The contemporaneous global expert, thus, happily and effectively provides its advice across issue domains, organizations, and sites (Littoz-Monnet and Uribe 2023); in fact, having a long list of advisees is endowed with prestige and thus reinforces the already established authority of the expert. Within

fields, those who can make claims to transferable skills and demonstrate their desirability and "employability" across fora therefore become endowed with a high degree of epistemic authority.

Conclusion

The political and the social delineate which groups or individuals can be recognized as experts. In this process, *macro structures and discourses, relations within specific groupings, and the enactment of expertise in the moment of action are strongly entangled and mutually reinforcing*. In fact, it is only analytically that one can differentiate between scales; in practice or "in action," all those scales and their associated dynamics are strongly enmeshed and hardly differentiable. In addition, it is only in and through action that the workings of broader discourses or ideas can be grasped and their political effects become visible.

There are a number of avenues for future research, and the ideas evoked below are in no way exhaustive. One of them consists in further exploring the effects on governing of the emergence of novel kinds of professionals and their associated forms of expertise in global arenas. When experts doing calculations, auditing organizations, checking procedures, organizing consultations—become increasingly valued, this has effects on governance too. The spreading out of these forms of expertise creates certain kinds of problematizations and solutions. The problem that needs solving typically becomes a lack of data, the poor attainment of a target, improving a procedure, and so on. Envisaged solutions also remain focused on these so that discussions center on the "best" method of measurement, how to "make people participate" through a platform or a forum dialogue, or how to have more complete data. While such questions do not lack value as such, they hide the political and structural components of problems, as well as the need for local and contextual knowledge.

In addition, further exploration of the sites and practices of knowledge production in global governance is also needed. Clearly, knowledge production is increasingly moving outside IOs. Philanthropists, consultants, and private companies do not only act as "advisors", but also produce data, metrics, research, and policy documents that are being used by IOs to govern the world. This raises questions of accountability that go beyond existing framings mainly focused on formal institutions.

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CHAPTER 41

PUTTING "THINGS" FIRST

On Objects and Agency in International Relations

ENRIKE VAN WINGERDEN

INTRODUCTION

All things come to those who wait—but not necessarily, it seems, to those of us in International Relations (IR). Indeed, it is only fairly recently, and through the engagement with other fields of study, that a fringe of IR scholars has come to engage with the existence of "things" in international political life at all. Rather than lifeless, passive, and insignificant things, objects are increasingly recognized as central to international political relations, practices, and controversies. This chapter is concerned with the emergence of "thing theory," or what I call *object-oriented approaches*, in IR. As with the rest of this Handbook, its primary focus is on the interdisciplinary subfield of International Political Sociology (IPS), where object-oriented approaches have come to flourish. Object-oriented researchers interrogate the emergence and endurance of particular things but also ask more fundamental questions about what things are, whether in essence or more specifically to "us" as IR scholars or as humans.

By focusing on "things," it might seem like object-oriented approaches move away from the focus on actors. After all, in Bentley B. Allan's words, they redirect us "from subjects to objects" (Allan 2018). Yet, in this chapter, I show that object-oriented approaches are deeply entangled with debates of agency and subjectivity in IR and may rather be understood as extensions or radicalizations of these debates. Debates on agency in IR have long centered on the extent to which human action is the key determinant of outcomes in international politics, or whether the structures in which humans are embedded should be seen as the main driving force (Wendt 1987; Wight 2006). Arguments for relationalism seek to replace this agency–structure duality through a focus on agency as a product of interactions between actors and their environments (Jackson and Nexon 1999). This has paved the way for a more dynamic conception of agency and a new set of questions on how agency might be distributed beyond the human world (Hoijtink and Leese 2019). Object-oriented approaches, often inspired by the work of Bruno Latour, radicalize these debates by extending considerations of agency to nonliving matter, challenging lingering distinctions between the human subject and the lifeless objects it commands.

While the object-oriented approaches discussed in this chapter diverge in critical respects, they emerge within a wider new materialist moment in social theorizing. New materialism is the name for a range of interconnected perspectives in the arts, humanities, and social sciences that have in common a practical and theoretical turn to "matter." In IR, the interest in new materialism responded to what was seen as the over-reliance on narrow, discursive interpretations of the international, specifically in critical theorizing (Aradau et al. 2014; Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams 2015). While once an emancipatory endeavor to deconstruct and thereby decenter the vocabularies of domination, linguistic and narrative approaches started to seem totalizing and restrictive in terms of envisioning alternative pathways. Radical forms of constructivism encompassed "an allergy to 'the real' " that "had the consequence of dissuading critical inquirers from the more empirical kinds of investigation that material processes and structures require" (Coole and Frost 2010).

Yet, new materialist approaches, including the object-oriented ones discussed in this chapter, do not simply privilege material reality over social reality, neither objects over subjects. Rather, they trouble, interrogate, and challenge established views on subject–object relations. In conventional grammar, "subjects" and "objects" have different functions. While the subject is the grammatical doer of the action, the object is the opposite: the thing that is being acted upon. The object-oriented approaches introduced in this chapter radically overhaul this conventional distinction by questioning what objects *are* and *do*. In this way, object-oriented approaches contribute in particular to the aims of IPS to challenge the oppositions inherent in traditional IR theorizing (Huysmans and Nogueira 2021).

In this chapter, I consider three emergent axes of object-oriented research. These axes share a similar new materialist theoretical heritage and may, for most intents and purposes, be considered part of the same mode of thinking. Because of their shared origin, new materialist approaches are usually grouped together without close attention to their mutual differences (Rothe 2017). Yet, as I argue, they sometimes draw upon oppositional theoretical assumptions and can offer different insights into the life of objects. As I show in this chapter, the differences between object-oriented approaches are especially instructive in considering how things disrupt established notions of agency. In this chapter, I therefore reorganize new materialist debates by identifying three distinctive approaches to the understanding and study of objects. I introduce the axes of "agential things," "manageable things," and "withdrawn things" and discuss how these interconnected, though divergent, approaches radicalize debates on subjects, objects, and agency in IR today.

Agential things: Science, technology, and materiality

Object-oriented approaches challenge the anthropocentrism of IR theory—that is, the inherent assumption that international political life should be understood primarily through the actions and thoughts of human beings. They tend to do this, quite literally, by putting "things" first. What we think of as the international is invariably made up of many different things. When we think of international borders, we think of passports, customs offices, and security infrastructures. When we think of the economy, we encounter currencies, commodities, and office buildings. When we think of the environment, our perception is shaped by thermometers, satellite-generated data, and maps. IR scholars, and international political sociologists in particular, have come to study these things as they circulate through and shape the international and constitute harbingers of political order as well as catalysts for political transformation (Salter 2015, 2016). One axis of research has emerged that focuses on objects as "agential things" within IR.

How these scholars approach the study of objects makes conventional understandings of agency in IR fairly conservative, as they tend to remain limited to a narrow set of doers: living beings, and humans in particular. If agency is the ability to act, these object-oriented approaches posit that things, devices, and technologies have agency too, as they create political possibilities and foreclose others. Things have an influence because not only are they used by humans but also they have properties and agential capabilities in their own right. One of the most obvious and familiar examples is the smartphone. Most of us who have a smartphone have a fairly personal and, indeed, intimate relationship to it. We use it to store photographs, write down thoughts, plan our daily schedules, and communicate with our loved ones. Many of us even take our smartphones with us to bed. Meanwhile, the functions of the smartphone are designed to use us. Our phones actively interfere in our cognitive operations by distracting us and keeping us glued to the screen. As "surveillant devices," they "follow their users around" and track the information given to them for all kinds of commercial and other purposes (Chambers 2016). International political sociologists have come to study smartphones and other objects as agential things, as they directly intervene in our most intimate everyday courses of action (Chambers 2016).

In some cases, the political actions of objects are an outgrowth of human political structures, such as in the case of smartphone surveillance or racist algorithms (Aradau and Blanke 2022; Lin 2021; Noble 2018). Yet, for objects to have agency and to create political possibilities and foreclose others, these functions need not be intentionally designed or programmed as such by humans. In 1872, at the height of the Second Industrial Revolution, Friedrich Engels observed how cotton workers' labor had become fixed by the authority of the steam engine. Cotton production must happen simultaneously in different rooms whilst keeping the steam machinery going, requiring a grinding coordination of workers' bodies. Therefore, for Engels, "the automatic machinery of a big factory is much more despotic than the small capitalists who employ workers ever have been" (Engels 1978). This is also the case for other large-scale

objects that must be operated through sustained coordination, such as shipping vessels today (Kahlili 2021). While in many cases an unintended consequence, this means that large-scale industrial and infrastructural objects have agential properties and an undeniable politics.

Even naturally occurring objects can profoundly shape political systems through their agential qualities. By focusing on the material properties of oil, for instance, Timothy Mitchell has argued that the substance itself has made democratic politics less likely (Mitchell 2011). Oil production, due to the nature of the substances, is concentrated within a relatively small number of places, where power and huge flows of income coalesce. This generates a different politics, one that undermines the organizing power of coal miners and their unions (Mitchell 2011). The material properties of oil also profoundly shaped the context of IR (Bridge and Dodge 2022). Indeed, the "global petroleumscape" is a highly particular one, oriented around the material objects of the oil industry—oil platforms, refineries, gas stations—and organized through an energy culture that reinforces the power of the industry and leads to increased consumption in everyday life (Hein 2022). By contrast, the agential qualities of renewable energy sources are different, as they constitute more dispersed sources of energy, and can therefore make decentralized modes of organization more likely (Schwartzman 1996). The oil platform or the solar panel do not render a particular course of political action already determined and inevitable, but through their associations with humans, they shape the workings of international politics.

Within these object-oriented approaches, there is no longer a clear distinction between active living subjects and passive inanimate objects (Chen 2012). Agency is distributed relationally not only among humans but also across human and nonhuman beings and material objects. Objects are not passive entities but, as Jane Bennett has theorized, possess a "vibrant materiality," meaning that they are "forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own (Bennett 2010). In other words, they have "thing-power" (Bennett 2010) Theoretical and empirical work in this vein has been developed most prominently through the interdisciplinary field of science and technology studies (STS), which has profoundly influenced the growing debates on objects in IR and IPS (Lidskog and Sundqvist 2015; Mayer et al. 2014; Schouten and Mayer (2016). An influential strand of theory within STS called actor-network theory (ANT) posits that agency is distributed through heterogeneous associations between humans, nonhumans, and objects (Barry 2013a; Best and Walters 2013; Bueger 2013: 338–342; Nexon and Pouliot 2013). By posing that agency is not just tied to human intention or consciousness, various nonhuman entities can also be considered doers, or "actants" in ANT's vocabulary. This focus on distributed agency, in line with many Indigenous ontologies, undermines the conventional, often deemed "modernist" distinction between subjects and objects (Agathangelou 2016; de Castro 2004). Nonliving things can also be actants, as they can weave together social relations. Bruno Latour, Michel Serres, and other STS scholars also speak of agential things as quasi-

objects (Latour 1993; Serres 1982; Simons 2017). A quasi-object is a nonhuman actant around which social relations form. A good example of this is a football, a thing that has a particular physics, and thereby continuously transforms the associations between the different football players and the field. The term "quasi-object" has also made its way into IR, for example to speak of algorithms as they create the shifting social realities in which we participate (Kessler and Lenglet 2020).

Object-oriented approaches to the study of agential things thus radicalize debates on agency as a relational faculty. This radicalization is in line with, but also pushes the relational, processual, and transversal premises of IPS. In conversation with STS literatures, IPS scholars have studied the agential capacities and affordances of objects, for instance of technologies (Hoijtink and Leese 2019), critical infrastructures (Aradau 2010; Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams 2011), waste (Acuto 2014), and "hidden or "dangerous" objects in security practices (Bellanova and González Fuster 2013; Salter 2007). Elspeth van Veeren poses that certain objects and materials enable, or even invite, forms of meaning-making by humans and shows that "object lessons" are embedded in material entities, for example in the watchtowers, wire mesh fences, and electronically monitored cells of Guantanamo Bay (Van Veeren 2014). In other work, I have argued that agential things shape not only the political worlds we observe but also our own interaction with those worlds (Van Wingerden 2022). The research process itself emerges "not only through conscious and willful action but also through nonintentional rapport with objects and (non)human others" (Van Wingerden 2022).

Yet, scholars attempting to put "things" first recognize that it is insufficient to transpose "the subject onto the object" (Grove 2016). The purpose of object-oriented approaches is not simply to extend the notion of agency to objects, and thus shift from subjects to objects, but rather to interrogate how the vibrant materiality of objects can be acknowledged through its complex associations with human action. As Jairus Grove writes, "we have to walk a fine line between loosening the grip of anthropocentrism, while still holding onto the human element in the mystery" (Grove 2016). While studies on agential things pursue this by tracing the shifting associations between humans, nonhumans, and objects, another strand of object-oriented research takes a closer look at human agency in the constitution of objects. It promises to radicalize existing debates through considerations of how human subjects act upon, create, and manage politically salient objects.

Manageable things: International expertise and governance objects

While a rich field of inquiry is emerging on the agential qualities of objects, a parallel, and at times intersecting, axis of object-oriented research focuses on how the creation and management of "things" is at the center of even the most conventional political

issues and debates. The difference between these axes is nuanced, yet important. Approaches to the study of "manageable things" slightly shift the focus to the role of objects within human practices and decision-making processes.

Studies are less concerned with the agency of objects than with how objects are created and handled through human politics. Scholars reveal the role that material objects play in political disputes and consultations, as well as how objects are made within the arenas of political power and expertise. These approaches allow us to interrogate the human making of material realities and thereby offer particular insights on objects in an all-too-human world.

It is perhaps in the study of things within political disputes and issues that the clearest connection between object-oriented approaches and the conduct of IR can be found. Studies show that the design, creation, and function of objects often already does become subject to international political debates and controversies, whether in the case of documents, maps, drones, or oil pipelines. While these objects tend to be created through human will, they can also be potentially disruptive, for instance through corrosion or breakdown, which can again become a matter of political controversy. The focus here is on "dingpolitik," which contains questions of "how material things become entangled in disputes, and how political controversy is mediated, shaped and channeled by the affordance of things" (Latour 2005; Walters 2014). IPS scholars have shown in the field of surveillance, that "it is not only particular objects that matter; but that 'mediation' itself 'becomes an object of scrutiny and struggle' " (Gros et al. 2017; Marres and Lezaun 2011). As noted by Andrew Barry, "rather than take the existence of such objects for granted, as a stable base on which the superstructure of international politics is subsequently erected, we have to recognize that their material existence can itself become a political matter" (Barry 2013a).

While objects may still be assumed to have qualities and affordances in their own right, the focus lies on how they come to matter politically through human arguments and disagreements. As Barry argues, "although this argument [on agential things] is an important one, it does not address the ways in which the existence and the activity of material artefacts have progressively been subject to monitoring, assessment, regulation and management" (Barry 2013b). It is precisely the creation, negotiation, and management of material objects through human action and political knowledge that are central to these object-oriented approaches. Studies of manageable things, therefore, extend the realm of human action and subjectivity to the material composition of the world. They do so not through a comparative assessment of the "material capabilities" of states, as in some other approaches in IR, but through in-depth studies of particular moments in which certain things, devices, or materials become disputed.

Yet, some object-oriented approaches to the study of manageable things go further in their interrogation of human agency. They have come to argue that objects themselves can come to be created within political practices. "Objects" are here not understood solely as material entities but rather as composite things consisting of both matter and

meaning. These are things such as "the economy," "the balance of power," or "the environment," which come into existence through a combination of material entities and human ideas that make them stick together. These objects are considered to be much more than social constructions. Allan proposes that we can understand these objects as "hybrid entities comprised of ideas, artifacts, physical phenomena, and practices" (Allan 2018). "The economy," for example, denotes both a social and a material entity, comprised of economic ideas, statistical practices (such as gross domestic product calculations) and laws, but also currencies, commodities, and office buildings, as we saw in the previous section. These elements are bound together as an object that can be known and managed.

Instead of assuming that objects such as "the economy" are unitary and uncontested entities, IR scholars have come to study the political practices through which they emerge. As Olaf Corry contends, at one point in time, when many of the elements of the economy were already in existence, the economy was nonetheless not considered an entity that was separate from the state or civil society at all (Corry 2013). Indeed, all these elements do not automatically form a coherent entity called "the economy." Rather, the emergence of the economy as a recognizable and manageable entity "is the product of yoking together quantitative representations, ontological distinctions, colonial governance practices, and monetary transactions" (Allan 2018; Mitchell 2002, 2005). While money and trade had long existed, it was only by the middle decades of the twentieth century, in the context of the collapse of the imperial order, that the economy became a distinct object of scientific analysis and political regulation (Mitchell 2002: 83). This transformation allowed for the restructuring of relations between colonial powers and their colonies while ensuring continued influence by Western powers (Mitchell 2002: 84). The creation of this social and material entity shaped the trajectories of IR in far-reaching ways, as "the economy was the object upon which the new politics of development was built" (Mitchell 2002: 84).

Though they may appear relatively stable, objects such as "the economy" are never fixed and bounded, since they continue to depend upon the practices that create them. This means not only that changes in practices can create changes in an object but also that different practices can create different versions of that object. An object that goes by a single name "can be many different things, imagine many different futures and inspire different interventions, and yet, all are draws under the same banner" (Simon and Randalls 2016: 5). It is through practical "forms of coordination" that an object is able to appear stable and unitary (Mol 2002: 55). The creation and endurance of such objects is thus intimately connected to human agency and subjectivity. It is through human acts and knowledge that objects are "composed." The term "composition," as defined by Latour, refers to the act of putting things together while retaining their heterogeneity (Latour 2010: 473–474). The term captures how the world "gains a collectively coherent understanding, through our embedding in an incoherent, complex, messy, and nonlinear set of relations with other humans, nonhumans, or objects" (Austin

2019: 225). Speaking of the composition of manageable things forms a way of dealing with the stickiness of political entities, such as "the economy," even when they are always emergent and in motion.

In IR, such composite entities have also come to be theorized as "governance objects." Governance objects are "amalgamations of purposes, technologies, institutions, rules, and norms" that states and other political actors seek to define, influence, and indeed manage (Allan 2018: 849). This means that "anything might become a governance object provided it can be designated, rendered governable, and problematized" (Allan 2018: 853). Most important is that a governance object is composed as "distinct, malleable and politically salient" (Corry 2013: 87). Scholars in IPS have studied the formation of governance objects ranging from general objects such as the climate (Dyer 2014), cyberspace (Dunn Cavelty and Jaeger 2015), health (Aue 2021), migration (Robinson 2018), and piracy (Bueger 2018) to localized ones, such as "Europe" (Corry 2013). In so doing, they have emphasized the importance of knowledge practices such as negotiating (Bueger 2018), benchmarking (Robinson 2018), and measuring (Aue 2021) in the creation of governance objects. In my own research, I zoom in on the everyday practice of comparing in the composition of objects, most importantly by showing how the entity we know as "Palestine" is crafted through comparisons with other settler colonial contexts (van Wingerden 2023). As we saw in the case of "the economy," the creation of these objects is a social and material process that is intimately connected to political visions, interests, and courses of action.

Indeed, even the term "governance object" itself betrays a close connection between the formation of the object and political power. As Ole Jacob Sending argues, the existence of authority within international institutions and other arenas of political power has a direct bearing on how governance objects come to be defined and acted upon (Sending 2015). Governance objects become established and differentiated from one another "through the competition between different actors or subjects of governance to establish some level of authority to govern them" (Sending 2015: 128). Studying governance objects, therefore, also means studying the workings of political authority and expertise. Even so, the creation of (shifting) boundaries around a governance object is not simply an authoritative process but will always entail discussion and disagreement due to differing conceptions and interests (Sending 2015: 128). This means that political contestation is foundational to the composition of a governance object, as well as to whether the composition succeeds and how important the object becomes.

Work on governance objects expands debates on agency by giving human action an even more central role in the composition of IR. Yet, this is not to say that governance objects are taken to be passive outcomes of human action. Indeed, governance objects have a dynamic relationship to human subjectivity and knowledge. Their emergence is both "formed by knowledgeable practices" and "makes possible new forms and domains of knowledge" (Allan 2018: 854). The existence of the object now known as

"the environment," for example, translates into globally coordinated practices and integrated bodies of knowledge rather than separate ones on plastic pollution, floods, wildfires, droughts, the melting of permafrost, etc. While the focus on manageable things thus underlines the formative role human politics and knowledges play within the creation and management of objects, the final strand of object-oriented research takes a more critical look at the role of humans. It challenges debates on human agency by questioning the extent to which humans can ever fully know, and indeed relate to, other living or nonliving objects.

Withdrawn things: Ontology and (non)relationality

The object-oriented approaches discussed so far attempted to move away from anthropocentric IR whilst retaining a close connection to human agency. Whether through associations between humans and agential things or through the human composition of manageable things, these approaches drew dynamic connections between objects and (non)human agency. Emerging from the same theoretical lineage, the third axis of object-oriented research consists of radically different approaches. Whereas the differences between the first and second axis of object-oriented research were more nuanced, the divergence of the third is more pronounced. In these approaches, the life of objects is no longer knowable and manageable—rather, it is never (fully) accessible to humans. In these object-oriented approaches, things are withdrawn from human subjectivity.

The view of objects as "withdrawn things" has been proposed most explicitly by a strand of theory called object-oriented ontology (OOO). The withdrawal of all things, to Graham Harman, is the central principle of OOO: "the reality of things is always withdrawn or veiled rather than directly accessible, and therefore any attempt to grasp that reality by direct and literal language will inevitably misfire" (Harman 2017: 38). While the reality of things does exist, it is not shaped within but extends beyond human (or, indeed, nonhuman) perception. OOO tends to reject "correlationism," which is the tendency to consider the world only through the existence of humans and their meaning-making practices. Instead, it endeavors to take reality seriously as independent of humans, breaking out of the cage of human thought and language to consider "the great outdoors" (Chandler and Reid 2020: 492; Meillassoux 2008).

These object-oriented approaches are often deemed "speculative," since they assume that any engagement with an object is mediated through our particular sensory experience: "since reality is always radically different from our formulation of it, and is never something we encounter directly in the flesh, we must approach it indirectly" (Harman 2017: 7). Therefore, the aesthetic experience, and in particular practices of speculation, mythical storytelling, imagination, and art, become key ingredients of our encounters with the world. Yet, they are also "realist" in that they assume that reality

does in fact exist, even if we can never gain direct access to it. The focus of approaches to the study of withdrawn things is often on philosophical and artistic meditations, more so than the empirically minded approaches we considered before.

In this interpretation of the study of withdrawn things, we come closest to any explicit theoretical move "from subjects to objects," as conventional "subjects," such as humans, are also treated as objects (Briant 2011: 25). No object can ever gain full access to another object. This means that all relations between objects (e.g. those between an animal and a plant) distort reality just as human perception does. By treating the human as just another object in a more expansive theoretical universe, this view displaces the human at the center of the conventional theory and has therefore been of particular relevance to post-humanist studies in and beyond IR (Cudworth, Hobden, and Kavalski 2017; Kaltofen 2017). While there are potential synergies with debates on the possibility of other ways of being in IPS, the connections have not been drawn in much detail, likely because of the divergence from common theoretical premises. The "lonely monads of Object-Oriented Ontology," as Grove (2016: 334) calls them, do not necessarily square with established relational or transversal accounts of agency, power, and domination (Burger 2022; Lemke 2017).

Indeed, this focus on withdrawn things is markedly different from the approaches discussed before. While it is often grouped together with the other approaches under the rubric of new materialism, it is important to acknowledge the divergence (Rothe 2017). While studies of withdrawn things similarly problematize conventional subject–object relations, they do so *not* by underlining how agency is distributed through associations between living beings and objects. As opposed to the previous two axes, they question the notion that the life of objects should be understood as related to that of humans. As Levi R. Briant states, "not everything is related to the human, nor" he continues, "is everything related to everything else" (Briant 2011: 26). In order to challenge the anthropocentrism of modernist thought, Briant explains, "it is necessary to staunchly defend the autonomy of objects or substances, refusing any reduction of objects to their relations, whether these relations be relations to humans or other objects" (Briant 2011: 26) Our connection to the Sun, for example, is shaped through particular qualities or effects (light, warmth, vitamin D), but the complete reality of the Sun is not revealed to us. Even when we study the Sun's physical characteristics and theorize about stellar evolution, there remains an excess of reality beyond what we can observe.

By challenging the notion that objects can be reduced to their relations, these object-oriented approaches question the meaning of, and limits to, relationality. These considerations tie in with emergent discussions on non-relationality in IR. Relational theories have long been presented as emancipatory, as they posit an interwoven world that is always in a state of becoming, and therefore always changeable through human knowledges and courses of action. Yet, as Madeleine Fagan conveys, claims that "everything is related" can risk projecting a view of existence as an interconnected unity, denying the presence of violent oppositions and exclusions (Fagan 2017). For

Claire Colebrook, this relationality has become another grand-narrative that is ever-expansive (Colebrook 2019, 2021). By positing that all existence is interconnected, relational views preclude the possibility of life outside of these relations and outside of the anthropocentric and imperial destruction they cause. Instead, scholars have sought to affirm the possibility that "societies, species, and substances may not yet, not entirely, or no longer be related or commensurate with one another" (Engelhard et al. 2021: 432). Allowing for non-relationality, instead, acknowledges the existence of life worlds that may be incongruous, unrecognizable, or even unknowable to humans (Yusoff 2013). As we have seen, theories of withdrawn things radicalize these debates by suggesting that objects are always withdrawn and never completely related to one another.

How this withdrawal of objects works has been made more concrete through the study of so-called "hyper-objects." Hyper-objects, in Timothy Morton's conception, are real events or phenomena that are so vast that they are beyond human comprehension, such as the solar system, global warming, capitalism, or evolution (Morton 2013). In the case of global warming, for example, the phenomenon is so encompassing that we are always inside it, yet we can only observe it indirectly through local manifestations such as rising temperatures or water shortages. This means that there is "withdrawal and disturbing intimacy all at once" (Moreton 2013: 189). Because global warming far exceeds these local manifestations, it defies our expectations of what a "thing" is. So, while hyper-objects exceed human apprehension, it is impossible to escape them, as we are constantly confronted with their local manifestations. These manifestations can be so overpowering that it "makes humans aware that there are things they cannot fathom, let alone access or solve" (Bargués-Pedreny and Schmidt 2019: 57).

In IR, there has been engagement with the notion of hyper-objects, primarily in work on the Anthropocene (Harrington 2016). As Pol Bargués-Pedreny and Jessica Schmidt state, "hyper-objects force humans to see that there is no possible conceptualisation of the world, the environment or nature, but a fundamental gap between humans and things; indeed, a gap between every-thing" (Bargués-Pedreny and Schmidt 2019: 57). By contrast, David Chandler and Jonathan Pugh state that instead of being nonrelational, this literature shows that objects might be "*too* relational to be grasped in coherently governable ways" (Chandler and Pugh 2020: 69). Objects are then "too close" to focus on, too full, too present for us (Chandler and Pugh 2020: 69). In this way, "it is precisely their relationality that makes objects withdrawn" (Chandler and Pugh 2020: 69). These debates on relationality are thus far from settled and are given renewed impetus through the consideration of withdrawn things.

Approaches to the study of withdrawn things challenge conventional accounts of human agency. By contrast to the literature on governance objects, the focal point is not on how things are created through human action (even though hyper-objects such as global warming undoubtedly are) but on laying bare the limits of human subjectivity. These object-oriented approaches turn to speculating on realities far beyond the human realm. These discussions have seeped into the fringes of IR debates on post-humanism

and the Anthropocene but have not (yet) made their way into the theoretical landscape of IPS. Yet, it is perhaps precisely to the field of IPS, with its focus on relational, processual, and transversal theorizing, that these approaches could provide an interesting provocation. While they are only softly stirring at the moment, these object-oriented approaches have the potential to further press debates on objects, agency, and relationality.

Conclusion

The political life of objects is increasingly explored in IR. In this chapter, I have introduced a variety of emergent object-oriented approaches through their distinctive ways of putting "things" first. As Tim Dunne, Lene Hansen, and Colin Wight state, we "need to keep asking whether there are processes, objects, 'things' that are not caught by the lens we are currently using" (Dunne, Hansen, and Wight 2013: 419). As I have discussed in this chapter, not only is the political life of things richer than most conventional lenses of IR theory would recognize, but also there is a wealth of different lenses *within* object-oriented research that see "things" differently. These lenses, which I have organized along the axes of "agential things," "manageable things," and "withdrawn things," emerge from the same new materialist moment in social theorizing yet offer divergent insights on what objects are and why they matter.

As I have argued, these approaches to the study of objects do not simply move away from the focus on subjects, and core debates on human agency, but should rather be understood as extensions or radicalizations of these debates. This is of particular relevance to the interdisciplinary subfield of IPS, within which these strands of "thing" theory are most prominent or potentially promising. Shifts toward "agential things" push debates on agency by showing that objects have agential qualities in and of themselves, though these always exist in close connection with the agency of (non)humans. This has led to a rich body of work on how agential things create political possibilities and foreclose others. Approaches to the study of "manageable things," in turn, extend the realm of human agency and subjectivity to the socio-material composition of the world. This has allowed for the study of objects as they are created and managed within political processes and the realms of international expertise. Finally, conceptions of "withdrawn things" reveal the limits of human agency and subjectivity by positing that objects are always unknowable. By foregrounding non-relationality and speculation, this has enabled radically different insights on our limited engagement with the material world. These approaches provide distinctive takes on what objects are, what they do, and what they have to do with us—or rather not. In so doing, they pave the way for a careful and bold reconsideration of all things international.

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